ATHLON SPORTS

2024 NFL PREVIEW

PLUS FANTASY PREVIEW

PRO FOOTBALL

The NFL's
OFFICIATING CRISIS
And 14 Other Things to Watch in 2024

DYNAMIC DUO
Mahomes, Reid and Their Place in History

In-Depth Team Previews

Anonymous Scouting

Draft Analysis

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QB, Bills

Drake **MAYE**
QB, Patriots

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Elusive — the word applies both to the player and to the postseason success he craves. Will Lamar Jackson put previous playoff failures behind him and lead a stacked Ravens team to a Super Bowl win in New Orleans?

PHOTO BY
MITCH STRINGER-
USA TODAY SPORTS

UNSTOPPABLE

Even with a less-than-optimal quarterback situation — Sam Darnold tutoring rookie J.J. McCarthy — Minnesota Vikings wide receiver Justin Jefferson promises to be just as electrifying (and possibly just as productive) as ever in 2024.

PHOTO BY
MATT KROHN-USA TODAY SPORTS

EDITOR'S NOTE

You might have read about the occasion of the NFL's founding on Aug. 20, 1920, in Canton, Ohio. It was a humble gathering at, of all places, a Hupmobile dealership (the Hupmobile was an early automobile built from 1909 until 1939). It was in that unlikely setting that representatives of Ohio's professional football teams formalized an alliance that they dubbed the American Professional Football Conference, which was rebranded the American Professional Football Association a month later as more franchises came aboard. Less than two years later, the association was calling itself the National Football League.

Two of the founding franchises that were represented at that dealership are still in existence — the Decatur Staleys, who moved to Chicago in 1921 and were rebranded the Bears in '22, and the Racine (later Chicago) Cardinals, who moved to St. Louis in 1960 and then to Arizona in 1988.

And for long-suffering Bears fans, it seems like the team's futile quest for a franchise quarterback is older than the Hupmobile, and just as successful. Sure, George Halas struck gold in the 1940s with Sid Luckman, but even Papa Bear couldn't solve Chicago's QB conundrum with any lasting success.

It's a tale as old as time, or at least as old as the NFL itself — you can't build sustained success without a great quarterback.

So, after cycling through an endless litany of second-tier talents, journeymen and ballyhooed draft busts, have the Bears finally solved this decades-long deficiency? Is Caleb Williams, the No. 1 overall pick in April's draft, the solution to what's been ailing the NFL's most storied franchise for most of its long history?

It might be a painful read for Bears fans, but NFL insider Doug Farrar takes us through the team's long history of quarterback futility and the reasons for it in his feature story "Eternal Quest" on page 20 of this year's Athlon Pro Football preview. Williams wants to rewrite the narrative; he'll get his shot, and spirits are soaring on the shores of Lake Michigan in anticipation.

One franchise that hasn't shared Chicago's problem of late? The Chiefs. Their peerless duo of quarterback Patrick Mahomes and head coach Andy Reid is the current gold standard of head coach-QB tandems, gracefully taking the baton from Tom Brady and Bill Belichick. And speaking of Brady, is it actually possible that Mahomes could supplant the seven-time Super Bowl winner as the greatest of all time? He's on that track, and the fact that we're even entertaining the possibility this soon after Brady's retirement is almost miraculous. Read more about Mahomes' climb toward GOAT-hood on page 16.

As always, there are countless storylines to follow this season, and Athlon senior editor Luke Easterling has identified 15 of the most compelling. Read Luke's rundown starting on p. 10.

We hope this magazine helps the time pass as we wait for the games to begin. If nothing else, hope is blossoming at this time of year. Just ask a Bears fan.

Rob Doster, Managing Editor

ATHLON SPORTS

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PRO FOOTBALL

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MARK J. REBILAS-USA TODAY SPORTS

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Uzo Aduba
Stand Up To Cancer Ambassador

Photo By
Matt Sayles

STAND UP TO CANCER

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15 THINGS TO WATCH IN 2024

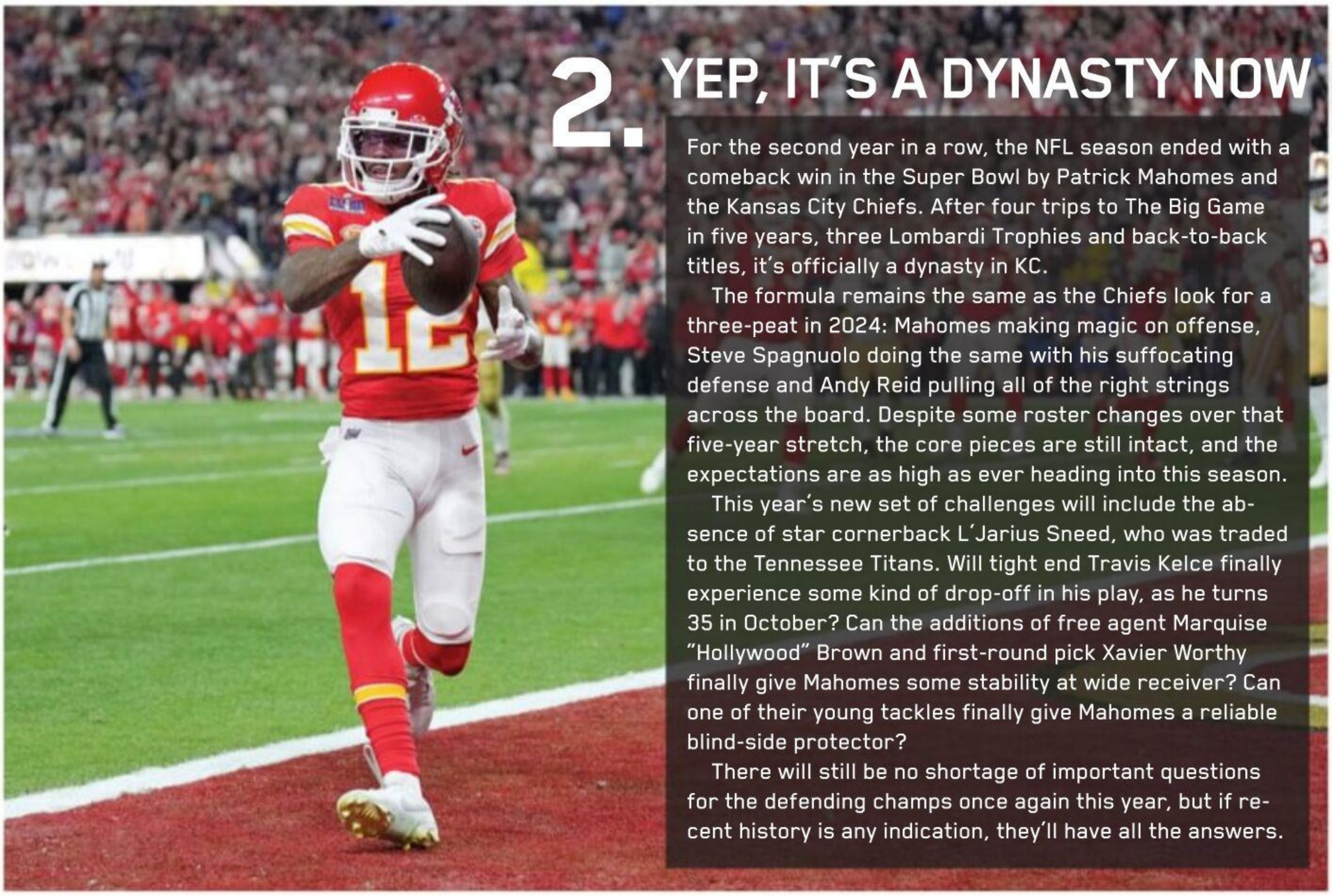
BY LUKE EASTERLING

1. RODGERS RETURNS

After an offseason full of hype and Super Bowl hopes, the Aaron Rodgers experience for the New York Jets in 2023 lasted four snaps. The future Hall of Famer suffered a torn Achilles tendon before the smoke had fully cleared from the pregame festivities at last year's regular-season opener, sending the Jets' dreams of a title run crashing back down to earth.

Rodgers and the Jets are going to give it another shot in 2024, and they've made plenty of offseason additions to try and give this year's team an even better shot at contention. Key veteran additions like left tackle Tyron Smith, wide receiver Mike Williams, right tackle Morgan Moses and left guard John Simpson should help on offense, as well as top draft picks like tackle Olu Fashanu and wide receiver Malachi Corley. The defense added help as well, with tackle Javon Kinlaw and end Haason Reddick joining the mix.

By all accounts, Rodgers is expected to be back to full strength and ready to roll for his 20th NFL season. But while the expectations will be sky-high once again, last year's result was a painful cautionary tale for a franchise and a fan base that now truly understand the risk of placing all their championship hopes on a 40-year-old quarterback.



2. YEP, IT'S A DYNASTY NOW

For the second year in a row, the NFL season ended with a comeback win in the Super Bowl by Patrick Mahomes and the Kansas City Chiefs. After four trips to The Big Game in five years, three Lombardi Trophies and back-to-back titles, it's officially a dynasty in KC.

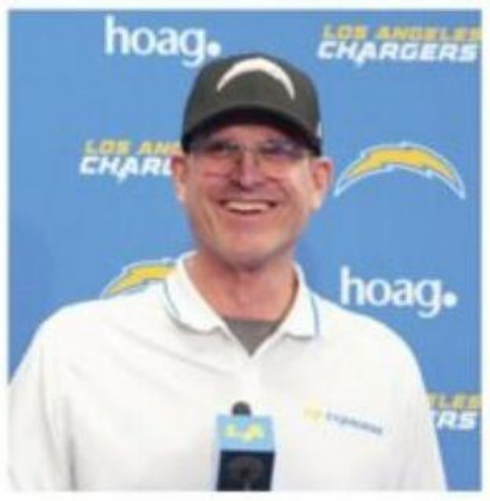
The formula remains the same as the Chiefs look for a three-peat in 2024: Mahomes making magic on offense, Steve Spagnuolo doing the same with his suffocating defense and Andy Reid pulling all of the right strings across the board. Despite some roster changes over that five-year stretch, the core pieces are still intact, and the expectations are as high as ever heading into this season.

This year's new set of challenges will include the absence of star cornerback L'Jarius Sneed, who was traded to the Tennessee Titans. Will tight end Travis Kelce finally experience some kind of drop-off in his play, as he turns 35 in October? Can the additions of free agent Marquise "Hollywood" Brown and first-round pick Xavier Worthy finally give Mahomes some stability at wide receiver? Can one of their young tackles finally give Mahomes a reliable blind-side protector?

There will still be no shortage of important questions for the defending champs once again this year, but if recent history is any indication, they'll have all the answers.

CHIEFS: KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS; RODGERS: BRIAN FLUHARTY-USA TODAY SPORTS;

3. HARBAUGH'S 2ND ACT



It's been nearly a decade since Jim Harbaugh was roaming the sidelines as a head coach in the NFL, but the most famous khakis in the game have now returned.

Despite a 44-19-1 record over a four-season run leading the San Francisco 49ers, one that included a trip to the Super Bowl and two more NFC Championship Game appearances, Harbaugh was let go after an 8-8 season in 2014. He went back to his alma mater and led Michigan to six 10-win seasons in nine years, with three conference titles and an 86-25 overall record.

Harbaugh's tenure back in Ann Arbor wasn't without controversy, but on the field, his homecoming ended in fairytale fashion last year with an undefeated season and the program's first national title since 1997. This despite Harbaugh being suspended for three games on two separate occasions in 2023; once for recruiting violations, and the other as a result of a sign-stealing scandal.

Now, Harbaugh returns to the pros, where he'll have a franchise quarterback in Justin Herbert but an otherwise aging roster in desperate need of an overhaul in the coming years as they hope to maximize their star passer's prime. Harbaugh has proven he can win in the NFL, and the Chargers will be hoping he can quickly transform them from underachievers into title contenders.

4. CHICAGO CALEB

At the end of the 2022 season, the Bears stole the No. 1 overall pick at the last minute thanks to a miraculous comeback win by the Indianapolis Colts against the Houston Texans. Chicago traded that selection to the Panthers for a massive haul that would end up netting them the No. 1 overall pick in this year's draft from Carolina.

They kept it this time, trading Justin Fields to the Pittsburgh Steelers to clear the way for USC's Caleb Williams to become their new franchise quarterback. A highly touted prospect in the same realm of hype as Trevor Lawrence and Andrew Luck, Williams arrives in the Windy City with lofty expectations for a franchise that's starving for a truly elite quarterback to rally around.

Thankfully for Williams, he'll start his career in Chicago with a much better supporting cast than Fields was ever able to enjoy, a more stable and competent coaching staff and offensive scheme and an array of pass-catching weapons that now includes Keenan Allen and fellow top-10 pick Rome Odunze alongside DJ Moore. The offensive line depth has been upgraded, too.

Now, it's all up to Williams to live up to the hype and finally dig the Bears out of the NFL basement.

5. KIRK & THE DIRTY BIRDS

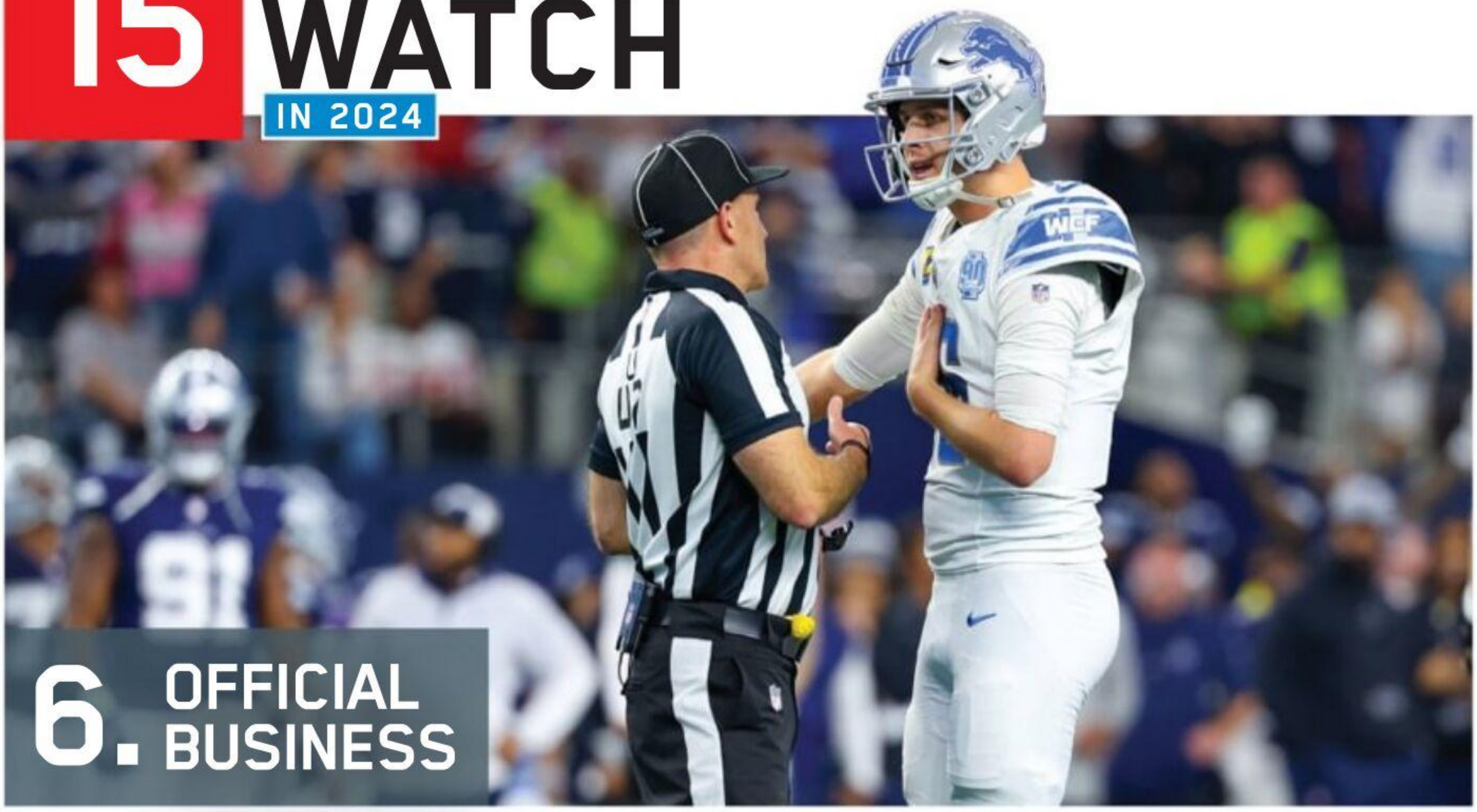
After languishing in quarterback purgatory since Matt Ryan's departure, the Falcons decided to take a massive swing in free agency this offseason, handing Kirk Cousins a four-year contract that includes $100 million in guaranteed money. That kind of money comes with an instant expansion of expectations in Atlanta, as Raheem Morris returns as the full-time head coach for the same franchise he led in an interim role back in 2020.

Morris should have the defense playing at a high level, but while there are plenty of weapons on offense, it's a dangerous game pinning instant postseason expectations on a franchise that hasn't made the playoffs or won more than seven games in a season since 2017. That's especially true when those hopes rest largely on a 36-year-old quarterback who's coming off a torn Achilles tendon.

The Falcons did spend their top pick in the 2024 NFL draft on some insurance for Cousins (Washington quarterback Michael Penix Jr.), but in doing so, they passed on the opportunity to use that top-10 selection on a blue-chip pass rusher or another top prospect who could have made a more immediate impact. As it is, anything less than a playoff berth and contending for an NFC South title with Cousins now at the helm will be a disappointment.

HARBAUGH: KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS; WILLIAMS: DAVID BANKS-USA TODAY SPORTS; COUSINS: DALE ZANINE-USA TODAY SPORTS; 49ERS: KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS

15 THINGS TO WATCH IN 2024



6. OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Let's be honest — it's not like complaining about officiating in sports is anything new. Regardless of the time period or other variables, human beings are always going to make mistakes, which means that officials are always going to miss calls, and fans are always going to be mad about it.

But as the NFL's reach, influence and accessibility continues to grow, more money continues to be riding on every play in every game, and social media continues to give fans their own instant replay system by which to judge the officiating, those mistakes are going to be magnified to a staggering degree.

Last year, it seemed like the league couldn't go a single week without some officiating controversy, from blatant missed calls to inconsistent penalty numbers between teams. We even had Lamar Jackson trip over an official, causing a safety. Consistency continues to be an issue, and new rule changes and interpretations aren't making things any easier. There's also a lack of transparency and accountability that fans are growing more exasperated with by the year.

If there's any area in which the game could stand to make some massive improvements, this might just be the one.

7. CAN THE 49ERS GET OVER THE HUMP?

Most NFL teams would kill for the five-year stretch the 49ers have enjoyed under head coach Kyle Shanahan and general manager John Lynch, making deep postseason runs in four of those five seasons. But with two Super Bowl defeats at the hands of Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs, and two more losses in the NFC title game to the Rams and Eagles, it's understandable for fans to wonder whether or not San Fran is ever going to close the deal under the current management.

Both Super Bowl losses required second-half comebacks from Mahomes, begging the question about whether or not Shanahan's teams know how to finish those tight games in clutch situations when they have the lead. They have only a couple of years left on Brock Purdy's ultra-cheap rookie contract, so their championship window is running out of time before they're going to have to break the bank to keep him, or find a replacement and hope they can keep enough of the other pieces together to remain in title contention.

Most of their key players on both sides of the ball are back for the 2024 season, and they're still expected to be the team to beat in the NFC again this year. But none of that will matter if the 49ers get all the way back up the mountain, just to falter at the last step yet again.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS: KEVIN JAIRAJ-USA TODAY SPORTS; 49ERS: KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS

8. FRESH START IN FOXBOROUGH

After a legendary 24-year run that included six Super Bowl wins, the Bill Belichick era is over in New England. His replacement as head coach is still a familiar face in Jerod Mayo, a former first-round draft pick of the Pats who has been an assistant on Belichick's staff since 2019.

Mayo faces the tall task of returning the Patriots to relevancy after the team has posted a 29-38 record in the four seasons since Tom Brady left. He'll get to start his tenure as Belichick's replacement with a new franchise quarterback in Drake Maye, the No. 3 overall pick in this year's draft. Jacoby Brissett is back as the veteran bridge to allow the Pats to be patient with Maye's development, but his talent might force him onto the field sooner than later.

Once a linebacker in Belichick's defense, Mayo should have his side of the ball still playing at a high level from the jump, but the team's ability to return to playoff contention will largely rest on whether or not Maye can live up to his lofty potential. If not, and his tenure is more similar to Mac Jones' than Brady's, New England might be making more wholesale changes again a few years down the line.

9. DAK'S LAST RIDE IN DALLAS?

Dak Prescott is heading into the final year of his current contract, and Cowboys owner Jerry Jones appears content to let that happen without signing his franchise quarterback to a new extension.

Since being thrust into the starting job as a fourth-round rookie due to injury, Prescott has led the Cowboys to five playoff appearances and three NFC East titles in eight seasons, but they've never gotten past the divisional round of the postseason during that stretch. Maybe that postseason futility will cause Jones to start over with a different veteran, or look to restart with a top draft pick on a rookie contract next offseason.

That's a dangerous gamble, though, considering how hard it is to find a quality starting quarterback in the NFL these days. Prescott is coming off one of the best seasons of his career so far – he finished runner-up in MVP voting and earned Pro Bowl honors for the third time. He'll be 31 this year, which in today's NFL is still well within the prime years for a top-shelf veteran quarterback.

If Prescott delivers another stellar season in 2024, it'll only get more expensive for Jones to keep him with a long-term deal next offseason. And if he's not back next year, Cowboys fans might end up wondering why Jones didn't extend him well before it ever came to such a thing.

MAYE: ERIC CANHA-USA TODAY SPORTS; PRESCOTT: KEVIN JAIRAJ-USA TODAY SPORTS

10. NEW RULES

Every year, the NFL makes a handful of rule tweaks that impact the on-field product to varying degrees, but this year will feature a couple that could have massive implications.

For starters, the new kickoff setup will be a drastic departure from even the biggest changes to the play in recent years, with the NFL adopting some of the key tenets of the UFL spring league's approach. Players on the kicking team can't move until the ball has landed on the ground or been touched by the receiving team, and the same for all players on the receiving team except for two returners. Onside kicks are only allowed in the fourth quarter and must be declared beforehand. No fair catches, either.

There's also the banning of what the league calls the "swivel hip-drop tackle," a tackling technique that has caused an increase in serious lower-body injuries in recent years. It's yet another somewhat ambiguous judgment-call penalty that officials will now be charged with making, which doesn't bode well considering the consistency issues that have already been rampant throughout NFL officiating.

Some things may look a bit different this year, and it'll be interesting to see whether or not these changes stick beyond the 2024 season.

15 THINGS TO WATCH IN 2024

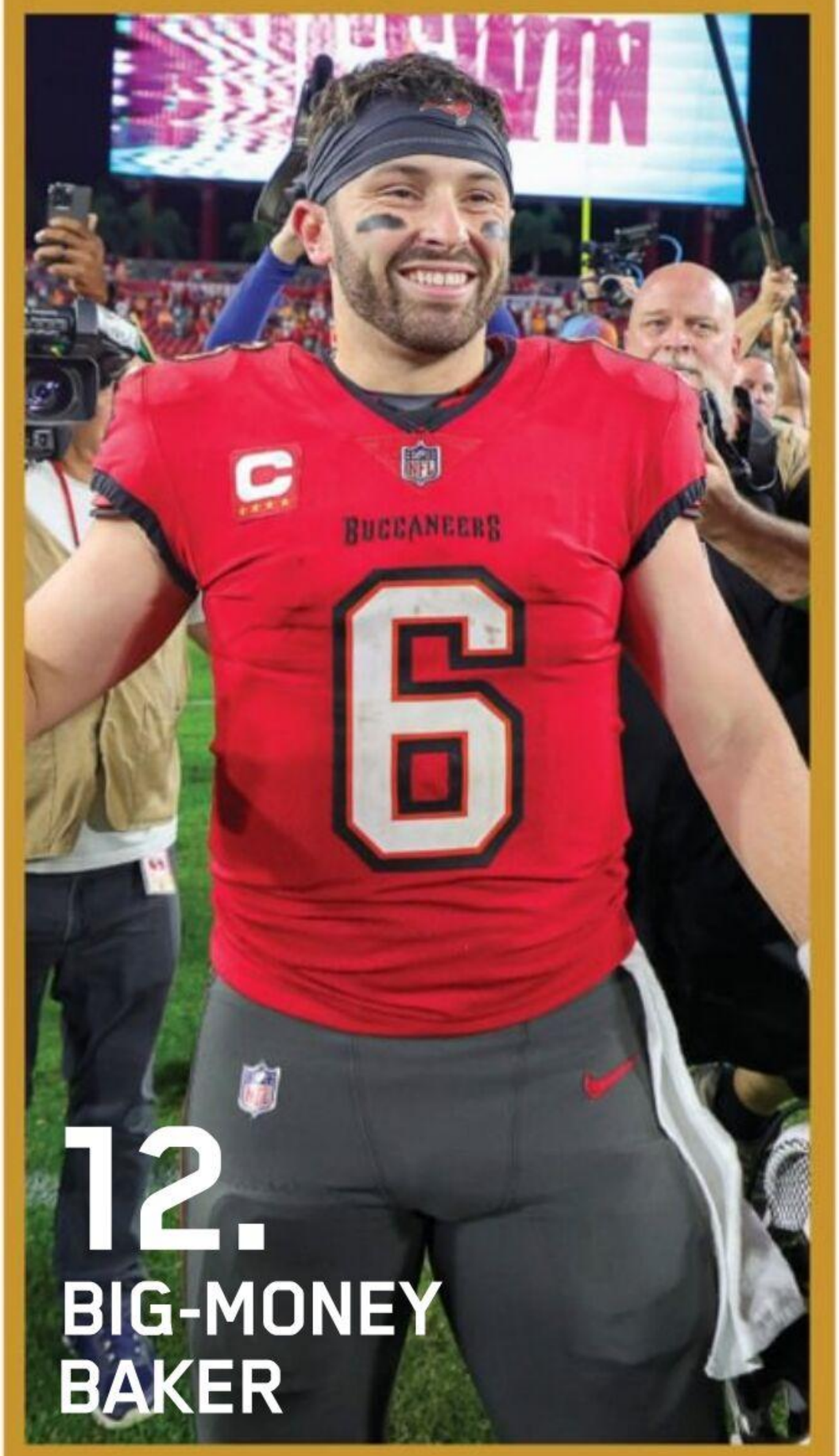
11. NOTHING BUT LOVE

It was a long wait for Jordan Love, but now that he's fully entrenched as Green Bay's new starting quarterback, it sure looks like the Packers have struck gold yet again at the game's most important position.

They took a similar approach when they drafted Aaron Rodgers late in the first round back in 2005, letting him sit and learn behind a future Hall of Famer in Brett Favre before taking the reins. Rodgers would lead the Packers to a Super Bowl win, as did Favre, and now it falls to Love to keep the trend going after biding his time behind Rodgers.

Love showed flashes of brilliance last year in his first season as the starter, quickly developing a strong chemistry with his young but talented receiving corps and leading the Packers to a playoff berth and a shocking road win over the Dallas Cowboys in the wild-card round of the postseason. After another offseason as the unquestioned leader of the offense, Love should be primed for even bigger things in 2024 and could have Packers fans dreaming of another Lombardi Trophy if he continues to develop and maximize his impressive combination of physical and mental tools.

The NFC North should be among the most competitive divisions in the NFL this year, but there's every reason to believe that Love will have the Packers right in the thick of a tight race for the division crown all year long.



12. BIG-MONEY BAKER

In 2022, Baker Mayfield bet on himself after the Browns gave up on him in favor of Deshaun Watson, and the former No. 1 overall pick bounced around between multiple teams before hitting free agency. He signed a cheap, one-year deal with the Bucs last offseason, hoping to prove he could still be a quality starter in the NFL at full strength and with a decent supporting cast.

That's exactly what he did, as Mayfield turned in the best season of his career, leading the Bucs to a better record than they had the year before in Tom Brady's final season and taking them within eight points of a trip to the NFC title game. He was rewarded with a new three-year contract extension worth $100 million, with $50 million in guaranteed money. That's a significant investment from Tampa Bay, but one they feel confident in after watching the locker room rally around Mayfield's leadership abilities and on-field play.

Mayfield's performance last season was a huge reason why the Bucs won a third straight NFC South title instead of competing for the No. 1 overall pick like many national outlets projected them to do by the end of the year. Now, his task will be to live up to his new contract and prove that his impressive 2023 campaign wasn't a fluke.

LOVE: KYLE TERADA-USA TODAY SPORTS; MAYFIELD: NATHAN RAY SEEBECK-USA TODAY SPORTS

13. RUSS VS. FIELDS

Two years ago, the Steelers spent a first-round pick on an in-state prospect in Kenny Pickett, hoping he could usher in a new era at quarterback. Instead, they gave up on the Pitt product and traded him across the Commonwealth to the Eagles, deciding to go a different route.

Enter Russell Wilson, fresh off a disappointing two-year run with the Broncos as a result of one of the worst trades in NFL history. Wilson floundered in his first season with Denver under head coach Nathaniel Hackett, but trading more premium draft picks to replace him with Sean Payton didn't do much to improve things for Wilson last year, although he did have a better season statistically.

The Steelers also dealt for Justin Fields, another recent first-rounder, for pennies on the dollar after it was clear the Bears had honed in on Caleb Williams as the new face of their franchise.

Steelers head coach Mike Tomlin told the media this offseason that Wilson is in "pole position" for the starting job, but Fields showed flashes of brilliance in Chicago despite a lackluster supporting cast, and he's talented enough to push the nine-time Pro Bowler in training camp. There are some intriguing weapons for them to work with, as well as a draft class that loaded up on help across the board for the offensive line, which bodes well for whoever ends up winning the battle.

15. BEST OF THE REST

There are way more than 15 things worth watching this NFL season, so here are some other compelling storylines for fans to follow in 2024:

- Can C.J. Stroud, DeMeco Ryans and the Texans take full command of the AFC South?
- Who will take Aaron Donald's place as the most dominant defender in the NFL?
- How soon will J.J. McCarthy see the field in Minnesota?
- Can the Lions make a Super Bowl run, or was last year their best shot?
- Will Jayden Daniels live up to his superstar potential and lead Washington back to relevancy?
- How will Bryce Young, Anthony Richardson and Will Levis fare in their second seasons?
- Will two-time MVP Lamar Jackson finally lead the Ravens to a Super Bowl?
- Is the Bills' Super Bowl window still open, despite key departures on both sides of the ball?
- Can the Eagles bounce back after falling off a cliff at the end of last season?
- How will Joe Burrow, Justin Herbert, Deshaun Watson and Daniel Jones return from injury?
- Will an improved supporting cast allow Kyler Murray to live up to his massive contract?
- Will retaining interim head coach Antonio Pierce prove to be the right move for the Raiders?
- Is this Matthew Stafford's last run?

14. NEW YEAR, NEW THREADS

Tis the season for changing up your uniform in the NFL, as a handful of teams made varying degrees of changes to their on-field attire for the 2024 season.

The New York Jets decided to make their "Sack Exchange" throwback look permanent, adding a home green and alternate black set to the white getup they wore for specific games last season. The Detroit Lions overhauled their entire look, going with a more classic vibe for their home and away sets, but also a new spin on their alternates with black jerseys and a new blue helmet (right).

The Houston Texans also did a complete revamp, adding multiple alternate helmet designs and a new "H-Town" combination that incorporates the iconic shade of light

blue from the Oilers days. The Denver Broncos unveiled a modernized look for 2024 while also bringing back their own throwbacks for specific games. Also adding a throwback to their current set are the Jacksonville Jaguars, who should definitely follow the Jets' lead and just return to that look permanently.

So, no matter what game you're watching on a Sunday afternoon this season, don't adjust your TV settings if you don't immediately recognize one of the teams.

NEW THREADS: DAVID RODRIGUEZ MUNOZ; BEST OF REST: TROY TAORMINA-USA TODAY SPORTS

GOAT IN WAITING

Can **PATRICK MAHOMES** become the greatest quarterback of all time?

BY DOUG FARRAR

The esteemed baseball statistician Bill James once came up with two ideas for discerning the value of a player's career: Peak Value and Career Value. Peak Value was a way to filter a player's effect on his team and the game overall based on his work through his greatest seasons.

That works in other sports as well, and for the purposes of this exercise, we will ask (and try to answer) whether Patrick Mahomes of the Kansas City Chiefs is the greatest Peak Value quarterback in the history of professional football, and whether he has a chance to eclipse Tom Brady as the GOAT, period.

Selected with the 10th overall pick in the 2017 NFL draft out of Texas Tech, Mahomes now has seven NFL seasons in the books, the last six as the Kansas City Chiefs' full-time starter. He sat for all but one of his games in his rookie campaign, but after that, it was all about Mahomes.

Thanks to the good folks at Pro Football Reference, we can sort Mahomes' career numbers in ways that illustrate just how historically valuable he's been at his peak. He's already won two NFL Most Valuable Player awards, three Super Bowls and three Super Bowl Most Valuable Player awards, so the question isn't whether Patrick Mahomes is an all-time great. He's already proved that beyond any doubt whatsoever.

Patrick Mahomes' first seven years in perspective

The first question is whether he's the best of all time in a Peak Value sense. If we review all pro football quarterbacks since 1950, starting with their second seasons and ending with their seventh seasons with at least 1,000 total passing attempts, Mahomes does make a compelling case for himself. He ranks first in completions (2,364), first in passing attempts (3,555), sixth in completion percentage (66.5 percent), first in passing yards (28,140), first in touchdown passes (219) with just 62 interceptions, second in passer rating behind only Aaron Rodgers (103.7 to Rodgers' 104.6), first in Adjusted Net Yards per Pass Attempt (7.77 in PFR's proprietary passing efficiency metric) and first in Success Rate (52.6), which is determined by a quarterback's success in down-and-distance situations.

Of course, these are all regular-season numbers. When we head to the postseason, the case really ramps up. Opportunity has a lot to do with this, as there are a ton of great quarterbacks throughout history who didn't have multiple postseason games early in their careers, but Mahomes has shone brightest in the playoffs.

Among quarterbacks in the postseason since 1950 from their second to their seventh NFL seasons with at least 100 passing attempts, Mahomes ranks first in playoff games (18), first in passing attempts (672), first in completions (456), first in passing yards (5,135), first in touchdown passes (41) with just eight interceptions, first in passer rating (105.8), third behind Troy Aikman and Aaron Rodgers in Adjusted Net Yards per Pass Attempt (7.59) and second in Success Rate (52.5 percent) behind Nick Foles, of all people.

Is Patrick Mahomes the best quarterback in pro football history from his second through his seventh seasons? The answer appears to be: unequivocally, yes.

How much should we adjust for eras?

The common (and legitimate) response when one tries to compare players over different eras in pro football history is that the eras were so different schematically and conceptually that such attempts are invalid. This is especially true of quarterbacks, who have doors open to them these days that they never had before.

In 1970, the first season after the AFL-NFL merger, quarterbacks averaged 6.7 yards per attempt, 16.4 touchdowns and 19.6 interceptions, with a passer rating of 65.6. In 1980, the averages were 7.0 yards per attempt, 21.6 touchdowns and 22.4 interceptions, with a passer rating of 73.7. In 1990: 7.0 yards per attempt, 20.5 touchdowns and 17.1 interceptions, with a passer rating of 77.3.

In the 2023 season, NFL quarterbacks averaged 7.0 yards per attempt, with 23.6 touchdowns and 13.4 interceptions, and a passer rating of 89.0.

In 1970, quarterbacks threw the ball 26.9 times per contest. In 2023, it was 33.7 attempts per game.

So yes, there are far more opportunities for current quarterbacks to put up ridiculous numbers than at any other time in football history. The counter-argument is that defenses have never been more complicated. Back in the day, when every NFL team put their quarterbacks under center and defenses played base 4-3 or 3-4, anything outside of that construct was considered exotic. When a quarterback took the snap from the shotgun, or a receiver went in motion, or a defense switched to five or six defensive backs, such a shocking move was pure heresy.

Now? Quarterbacks have to deal with defenses that are entirely amorphous from the fronts to the coverages. Defensive lines look like petri dishes; linebackers are basically big safeties who can cover half the field with ease; nickel is the new base defense; and coverage movement blurs the picture pre- and post-snap in ways that quarterbacks of the past could have never imagined.

Before we throw out all the modern metrics and context and assume that Dan Marino would have thrown for 8,000 yards per season with the modern passing-favorable rules, we should also consider what Mahomes and his contemporaries have to decipher. Mahomes has had defenses throw everything from rush-three/drop-eight coverages to disguised two-deep looks at him, and he has managed to navigate it all.

Assessing eras is worthwhile, but it doesn't stick as much as you might think.

What will Mahomes have to do for the rest of his career?

This is where it gets interesting because Mahomes is just entering the time in his career where a lot of all-time quarterbacks start to put their best work out there. Brady's eighth season (2007) was the one in which he torched the NFL with 50 touchdown passes and eight interceptions, nearly leading the New England Patriots to a perfect season. Peyton Manning's sev-

MARK J. REBILAS-USA TODAY SPORTS

enth season (2004) was the one in which he threw 49 touchdowns to 10 interceptions. Aaron Rodgers' seventh season (2011) was the one in which he may have put together the single greatest quarterback season in pro football history, with an NFL-record passer rating of 122.5.

So, let's spin this forward and look at the best quarterbacks from their seventh through their 12th seasons (another six-year span), minimum 1,000 passing attempts. As you would expect, the top guys in Adjusted Net Yards per Pass Attempt are Manning, Brady, Rodgers and Steve Young. No surprises there, and outside of a couple of outliers like Jared Goff and Norm Van Brocklin, the list goes on with few shockers.

Drew Brees is the leader in touchdowns here with 218; behind him are Rodgers, Manning, Brady and Philip Rivers. Again, no surprises there.

Mahomes' Adjusted Net Yards per Pass Attempt for seasons 2-7 is 7.77; he'd simply have to maintain that with a very small bump to match Manning (7.87) or Brady (7.79). And his 219 touchdown passes in Years 2-7 put him one ahead of Brees in Years 7-12. Should he keep up his pace through the year 2029, he'll be the best young quarterback and the best middle-aged quarterback ever. Which puts him one giant step forward in the Greatest of All Time argument.

Now, the third tier is stacked with a ton of future Hall of Famers, and this is where modern quarterbacking starts to become more complicated when it's time to determine the GOAT.

Older means better, more often than not

From Years 13-18 (minimum 1,000 attempts) of any quarterback's career, Mahomes will have to contend with guys like Brady, Manning, Rodgers, Rivers and Ben Roethlisberger, who were at times better in those later years than before. This career era is when Brees threw 196 touchdowns to 68 interceptions and had a passer rating of 103.5. Brady threw 188 touchdowns to 45 interceptions and had a passer rating of 99.4. Rodgers has thrown 178 touchdowns to just 33 interceptions, with a passer rating of 102.7. Roethlisberger threw 146 touchdowns to 64 interceptions,and had a passer rating of 92.7.

Here is where Mahomes would have to keep that standard together as a pure quarterback when his mobility and ability

DYNAMIC DUOS

The greatest head coach/QB combinations of all time

Andy Reid and Patrick Mahomes have already established themselves as one of the greatest head coach/quarterback tandems in pro football history, but who will they have to pass if they want to be the best ever? Here are our best head coach/quarterback duos, who forged their legacies before Reid and Mahomes started scalding the NFL together in 2018.

Bill Belichick and Tom Brady, New England Patriots (2000-19) Six Super Bowl wins, nine Super Bowl appearances, the greatest head coach in pro football history and the greatest quarterback in pro football history. That sums it up pretty nicely.

Vince Lombardi and Bart Starr, Green Bay Packers (1959-67) Starr isn't given his just due as the engine of those great Packers offenses of the 1960s, but he ranked 10th in pro football in passer rating from 1959 through '67, when Lombardi was his head coach. Five NFL championships and wins in the first two Super Bowls elevate this duo to the stratosphere.

Bill Walsh and Joe Montana, San Francisco 49ers (1979-88) The 49ers entered the NFL in 1950 and never won a championship — until they hired Walsh as their head coach in 1979 and he selected Montana in the third round of the draft that same year. Two years later, the 49ers won Super Bowl XVI. They then made the playoffs every year from 1983 through Walsh's final season of 1988, picking up two more Super Bowl wins along the way and establishing both coach and quarterback as among the best the game has ever seen.

Paul Brown and Otto Graham, Cleveland Browns (1946-55) The Browns dominated the All-America Football Conference in all four years of that league's existence and then dominated the NFL when the AAFC folded and sent a few teams up the ladder. The Browns defeated the two-time champion Philadelphia Eagles in their first NFL season in 1950 to take home the title, and they proceeded to play in every NFL championship game through 1955, winning two more titles (1954 and '55).

Chuck Noll and Terry Bradshaw, Pittsburgh Steelers (1970-1983) It was rough going for Noll and Bradshaw at first — Noll wanted his quarterback to play within a defined system, and Bradshaw was the bronco who kept bucking. But starting with the 1974 season, it all came together, as the Steelers won four of the next six Super Bowls. As NFL rules became more favorable to passing games, Bradshaw became the force multiplier he had struggled to be before.

Andy Reid and Patrick Mahomes

KANSAS CITY CHIEFS (2017-PRESENT)

This entry deserves an asterisk, or at least a grade of incomplete, as there may be more legend-sealing titles to come. At this rate, though, it won't take long for Reid and Mahomes to climb the ladder. Three Super Bowl titles in the last five NFL seasons have vaulted this duo up the charts, and with Mahomes at the helm of Reid's offenses, the Chiefs have never ended a season sooner than a loss in the AFC Championship Game. Mahomes has been the most prolific quarterback in NFL history over the first seven seasons of his career, and with Kansas City's defense getting younger and better at the same time, we could be looking at a true, lasting dynasty.

FROM TOP: KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS; MARK J. REBILAS-USA TODAY SPORTS; MANNY RUBIO-USA TODAY SPORTS

to create explosive plays outside the pocket would be affected by age to an undetermined degree. Here is where Mahomes would have to up his game from the pocket, as age starts to limit the freelance stuff. Not that he couldn't, but in a 2023 offense that was hampered to a large degree by shortfalls in receiver talent and serious protection issues from his offensive tackles, Mahomes completed 444 of 628 passes from the pocket (70.7 percent) for 4.450 yards, (7.5 yards per attempt), 29 touchdowns, 12 interceptions and a passer rating of 98.0. Not bad at all, but since we're talking about Mahomes' age-28 season, we're starting to get into rarefied air. As great as Mahomes has been, this is where it gets tougher. And if Mahomes wants to play deep into his 40s, it may be utterly impossible to keep up, because the Career Value GOAT has everyone else beaten by miles and miles.

Brady and Mahomes: the gold standard at the game's marquee position.

NATHAN RAY SEEBECK-USA TODAY SPORTS

Tom Brady in his 40s might be insurmountable

There's little doubt that Brady is the greatest quarterback in the history of football, and that's true from both a Peak Value perspective and from a Career Value perspective. And anybody who wants to top him on all of those fronts will have to challenge the fact that Brady, who retired in 2022 when he was 45 years old, was not only the best quarterback ever in his 40s, but also the best quarterback at that age by an impossibly wide margin.

From age 40 on, Brady completed 2,509 passes in 3,826 attempts (65.6 percent) for 27,632 yards (7.2 yards per attempt), 193 touchdowns, 60 interceptions and a passer rating of 97.1. Warren Moon ranks second in most categories as a quarterback in his 40s, and he wasn't even close — 608 completions in 1,070 attempts (56.8 percent) for 7,148 yards (6.7 yards per attempt), 44 touchdowns, 34 interceptions and a passer rating of 77.7. The only other quarterback who was remotely as efficient as Brady in his 40s was Brees, and he completed 556 of 768 passes (72.4 percent) for 5,921 yards, 51 touchdowns, 10 interceptions and a passer rating of 111.2. Brees did that over just two seasons, though.

Perhaps the most ridiculous statistic of Brady's career in a seemingly infinite number of them is that he threw more touchdown passes in his 40s (193) than he did in his 20s (147). It's highly unlikely that any other quarterback will ever pull that off.

So Mahomes would have to maintain his current standard of play into middle age, a time of his life when most football players have been broadcasters for a good decade or so. This is the top of the mountain, and as is the case with most things NFL, Tom Brady set the impossible standard.

Mahomes is already among the greatest, but greatest of all time?

Throughout pro football history, we've seen young quarterbacks start off hot and fall off for all kinds of reasons. Age takes its toll, and it's undefeated even when Brady is its opponent. Injuries can be a constant problem for some quarterbacks; you need look no further than the fates of Andrew Luck and Robert Griffin III, the two quarterbacks selected with the first two picks in the 2012 NFL Draft. Both players were thought to be generational, and they were for a while, until injuries won the battle. And sometimes, there are mysterious falloffs in efficiency and effectiveness that take hold and never let go for whatever reason. Russell Wilson, who looked like a sure-fire Hall of Famer in his first seven seasons, has looked like anything but since then.

There are at least five of those "early bloomers" for every guy like Brady, Manning and Marino. And there's no way of knowing how Mahomes will deal with the vagaries of time. Chiefs head coach Andy Reid, Mahomes' primary offensive shot-caller throughout his NFL career, is 66 years old. How long will Reid want to maintain that perfect quarterback relationship, and who will replace him? What happens when Travis Kelce retires, or if the Chiefs are unable to remedy their recent issues with receiver talent, or if Mahomes' protection issues continue into the phase of his career in which mobility becomes an issue?

Look, there's absolutely no doubt that Patrick Mahomes has made himself the face of the league with as great a first seven seasons as we've ever seen. That's one peak in a series of them that Mahomes will have to amass as time goes along.

And questioning his ability to get there is far less an indictment of Mahomes than it is a statement of how difficult it is for any quarterback to ride those career peaks over time.

ETERNAL QUEST

AFTER 75 YEARS OF MISSES, THE CHICAGO BEARS HOPE THEY'VE FINALLY FOUND A FRANCHISE QUARTERBACK

BY DOUG FARRAR

The Chicago Bears are one of the most legendary teams in any sport. They are a founding franchise of the NFL. And they've won nine championships, including Super Bowl XX at the end of the 1985 season with one of the greatest defenses in history.

The Bears are also the only team in the history of professional football never to have a quarterback throw for 4,000 yards or 30 touchdown passes in a season. That's quite an embarrassment for a franchise that's been around in some form or fashion since the NFL made its debut in 1920. And if you want to name a true franchise quarterback for the Bears, you'd have to go back to Sid Luckman, who played his last down of football in 1950.

Obviously, the Bears hope that this streak of quarterback mediocrity will end with the first overall selection of USC's Caleb Williams in the 2024 draft, and Williams seems to have all the attributes to do just that. But Williams is far from the first Chicago star quarterback to arrive with high hopes and leave too early with dashed dreams.

At 75 years and counting, the Bears have swung and missed over and over when it comes to the most important position in team sports. Why has such a great team blown so many opportunities? The answers are multiple, complicated and in some cases, infuriating and nonsensical.

> "I really believe we're about to break this cycle and get this city in a really good situation and win a lot of games. The past is the past. I don't worry about that at all. It's about where we're going."
> — BEARS GM RYAN POLES

FROM LEFT: MIKE DINOVO-USA TODAY SPORTS; KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS; MIKE DINOVO-USA TODAY SPORTS

AN INCONSISTENT (TO SAY THE LEAST) EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

If you're going to whiff on top-tier quarterbacks for 75 straight years, you need an infernal combination of bad luck, horrible decision-making and a unique inability to understand what makes great quarterbacks great.

The Bears have failed quite spectacularly in all three areas.

Let's go back to the World War II era, when the team had Luckman, and all seemed right with the world. In 1944, the Bears lost a coin flip with the Detroit Lions, who used the fourth overall pick that year to select Northwestern's Otto Graham. Though Graham never signed a contract or threw a ball for the Lions — he of course succeeded at a Hall of Fame level with the Cleveland Browns of the All-America Football Conference and later the NFL — one is left to wonder what the Bears of the 1950s would have looked like with Graham as Luckman's successor.

George Halas had plans post-Luckman, though none of them worked out. He selected Notre Dame's Johnny Lujack with the fourth overall pick in the 1946 draft, and Lujack actually led the NFL in completions, attempts, passing yards and passing touchdowns in 1949. Lujack also somehow became a first-team All-Pro in 1950, despite the fact that he threw four touchdowns compared to 21 interceptions and finished that season with a passer rating of 44.0. Maybe it was the 11 rushing touchdowns that got him there. In any event, Lujack retired after the 1951 season because his insurance business would not allow him the time or bandwidth to continue as a professional quarterback.

The Bears took Texas' Bobby Layne with the third overall pick in the 1948 draft, and after one season warming the bench behind Luckman and Lujack, Layne refused to return to the team, tried to engineer a trade to the Packers and was instead traded to the New York Bulldogs for two draft picks and $50,000, to be paid in four installments. The Bulldogs traded Layne to the Lions in 1950, and the Lions agreed to pay off Layne's fee to the Bears.

Halas would have been better off with the player than the cash. From 1950 through '58, Layne led Detroit to three NFL championships, with six Pro Bowl nods and two first-team All-Pro nods. He was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1967.

Halas had another shot at a great quarterback in the 1949 draft, when the Bears took a flier on George Blanda, who played for Bear Bryant at Kentucky. Blanda led the NFL in passing attempts and completions in 1953. But over time, Halas' insistence that Blanda was a kicker, not a quarterback, riled Blanda to the point that he retired from the game in 1959. Of course, Blanda signed with the Houston Oilers of the new American Football League in 1960, setting all kinds of standards for productivity. Blanda retired in 1976 with three AFL championships (two with the Oilers, one with the Oakland Raiders), and he was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1981 as the all-time leading scorer with 2,002 points.

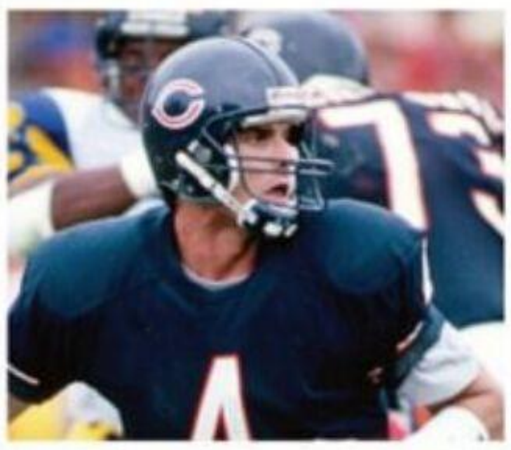
In 1951, the Bears selected Notre Dame's Bob Williams with the second overall pick. Williams played in 1951 and

’52 with no great distinction, spent 1953 and ’54 away from the game in Korea and came back for one more season in 1955, when he completed 15 of 40 passes for 256 yards, three touchdowns, five interceptions and a passer rating of 45.4.

Things have not really improved since.

In 1970, the Bears lost a coin flip with the Pittsburgh Steelers for the right to the No. 1 overall pick in the draft. The Steelers selected Terry Bradshaw. The Bears then traded their second overall pick to the Packers and wound up taking Oklahoma State quarterback Bobby Cutburth in the fifth round. Cutburth never played a regular-season snap in the NFL.

In 1979, Bears scout Bill Tobin had a first-round grade on Joe Montana, another Notre Dame product who eventually went to the San Francisco 49ers with the 82nd pick in the



Since Jim McMahon, the Bears have spent a slew of first-round picks on QBs, including Jim Harbaugh, Cade McNown, Rex Grossman, Mitchell Trubisky and Justin Fields. Can Caleb Williams end the merry-go-round?

third round. General manager Jim Finks nixed the idea of Montana as a first-round pick because he believed in Bob Avellini, and because he had already traded a first-round pick for quarterback Mike Phipps in 1977. In 1978, Avellini threw five touchdown passes compared to 16 interceptions. In 1979, Avellini attempted just 51 passes, and he was never a factor in any regard as a quarterback ever again. Phipps completed 20 passes for the Bears in five seasons and was out of the NFL after the 1981 campaign.

As for Montana? Well, you know that story.

Since the AFL-NFL common draft began in 1967, per

MCMAHON: MALCOLM EMMONS-USA TODAY SPORTS; HARBAUGH: USA TODAY SPORTS; MCNOWN: KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS; GROSSMAN: JERRY LAI-USA TODAY SPORTS; TRUBISKY: MIKE DINOVO-USA TODAY SPORTS; FIELDS: JAMIE SABAU-USA TODAY SPORTS; WILLIAMS: JASON PARKHURST-USA TODAY SPORTS
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ESPN Stats & Info, the Bears have selected six quarterbacks in the first round. Those quarterbacks — Jim McMahon in 1982, Jim Harbaugh in 1987, Cade McNown in 1999, Rex Grossman in 2003, Mitchell Trubisky in 2017 and Justin Fields in 2021 — have combined for two Pro Bowl nods (McMahon in 1985; Trubisky in 2018), and no All-Pro selections.

In retrospect, the Trubisky pick especially stings. The Bears traded up to take Trubisky out of North Carolina with the second overall pick despite the fact that Trubisky had just one season as a starter in college. In doing so, they passed on an explosive quarterback out of Texas Tech by the name of Patrick Mahomes. Trubisky made the Pro Bowl in 2018, but the Chiefs did a little better with the 10th overall pick, wouldn't you say?

A LACK OF TOP-TIER TARGETS

The Bears' quarterback rooms have been pretty barren, but there has also been perennial lack of top-tier receivers. When the Bears have had better than average receivers, the quarterbacks haven't measured up, and vice versa. Brandon Marshall had some good seasons with the team from 2012 through '14, but Marshall's primary quarterback was Jay Cutler, so it didn't go quite as successfully as the team had hoped. The team's best home-grown receiver might have been Harlon Hill, who was selected in the 15th round of the draft — in 1954.

Among wide receivers, Hill is the team's all-time leader in receiving yards (4,565) and receiving touchdowns (40). Johnny Morris, a 12th-round halfback and flanker in the 1958 draft, exceeded Hill's career yardage total with 5,059. Two full-time running backs lead the franchise in career receptions — Walter Payton with 492, and Matt Forté with 487. Current wideout DJ Moore is the team's all-time leader in receiving yards per game with 80.2, and he's been with the team exactly one season. He was part of the trade with the Carolina Panthers that gave the Bears the draft pick to select Williams. These are about the lowest "highs" you'll see from any pro football team, especially one with such a long history.

A MINDSET THAT STUNTED QUARTERBACK DEVELOPMENT

More often than not throughout that history, the Bears seemed to prefer quarterbacks who might be described as game managers — guys who would take the checkdown, hand the ball off and rely on typically great defenses. There is perhaps no better example than Ed Brown, Chicago's primary quarterback of the 1950s. Brown, selected in the sixth round of the 1952 draft out of Hartnell College, was safe but utterly unspectacular for the team during his tenure. He totaled 63 touchdowns and 88 interceptions in his time with the team (1952-61), but there was no real push to replace him. Perhaps Halas had tired of taking quarterbacks high in the first round and either being disappointed by their lack of interest in playing for him, or running them out of town on a rail because the quarterbacks and Papa Bear didn't see eye-to-eye.

As a result, and through the decades with few exceptions, the Bears went for quarterbacks who would stand still and throw the ball safely. The problem with that philosophy is that there's nowhere to go when you need a quarterback with a higher ceiling. The occasional alternatives were equally limited but more "dangerous" (i.e., inconsistent) quarterbacks like McMahon, Cutler and Grossman.

HISTORY IS DEAD, OR SO THE BEARS HOPE

Not that current Bears general manager Ryan Poles is on the hook for all the failures that preceded him, but as Williams was selected in the first round just three years after Fields was taken with the 11th overall pick to replace Trubisky, there's no way Poles can escape the history.

Poles selected Williams with the first overall pick that the Bears got from the 2023 trade with the Carolina Panthers. That was the first bit of luck — the Panthers were bad enough to be first in the draft order. Poles did a ton of due diligence on Williams, who does have some Mahomes-ish aspects to his playing style, and he was confident with the pick. Then, with their own pick (No. 9 overall), the Bears selected Washington's Rome Odunze, who has the potential to be one of the best receivers in the franchise's blighted history at the position.

Poles doesn't want to hear about the past; he's only interested in fixing it. He saw it happen with Mahomes in 2017 as the Chiefs' director of college scouting at the time, and he's fully invested in erasing what has come before him with the right guy.

"It pisses me off a little bit, to be honest with you," Poles said in March regarding any mention of the history. "We were hired to break a cycle. The same thing when we were in Kansas City. Coach [Andy] Reid, all of us were brought there to break a cycle. And we did. And no one talks about those days anymore; it's all about what they are right now.

"I really believe we're about to break this cycle and get this city in a really good situation and win a lot of games. The past is the past. I don't worry about that at all. It's about where we're going."

And if Williams wants to be the most remarkable rookie quarterback in Bears history … well, the bar is pretty low. Trubisky holds the mark for rookie passing yards with just 2,193. Trubisky also holds the first-year record with 190 completions. But he's not the rookie touchdown leader; that goes to Charlie O'Rourke, who threw 11 in 1942 as Sid Luckman's backup. O'Rourke also holds the rookie mark for passer rating at 82.1, if you don't count the 92.1 passer rating put up by Mike Hohensee in 1987 as one of the replacement players during that season's strike.

Soon after he was selected by the Bears, Williams did admit that he was aware of the history.

"That may be the narrative," Williams said. "For me, I handle my job. I'll be a great teammate first and foremost. I handle business on and off the field and then I go to work.

"I enjoy what I do. I love what I do. I'm in there with my guys, and my guys are seeing me, they see how hard I work, their guy, their QB, and we go get it. We go win games together."

Hopefully with the quarterback leading the way — for once.

2014 DRAFT REVISITED

On paper, the 2014 NFL Draft class looked like a haul of historic quality, but history hasn't been so kind to this particular collection of talent. Of course, there are some likely Hall of Famers here — Khalil Mack, Mike Evans, Aaron Donald, Zack Martin and second-rounder Davante Adams — but busts and no-names saddle this draft with its share of mediocrity and disappointment. In other words, it's your annual reminder that the draft can be a crapshoot, and that draft position and capital alone aren't panaceas. Of course, the Macks and Donalds of the world make it worth the effort.

1 JADEVEON CLOWNEY

DE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Houston (2014-18), Seattle (2019), Tennessee (2020), Cleveland (2021-22), Baltimore (2023)

Clowney was hyped as the most electrifying edge prospect in years on the strength of an All-America sophomore season at South Carolina and his viral annihilation of Michigan RB Vincent Smith in the 2013 Outback Bowl. A pedestrian junior season failed to derail the hype train. But while he's been productive — 50.5 career sacks and 14 forced fumbles — Clowney has not been the generational player many expected. In fact, after some stellar seasons in Houston, he's been something of a journeyman, bouncing among five different franchises while battling injuries. **Pro Bowls:** 3 (2016-18)

Troy Taormina-USA TODAY Sports

2 GREG ROBINSON
OT, AUBURN

St. Louis/L.A. Rams (2014-16), Detroit (2017), Cleveland (2018-19)

Robinson arrived at training camp his rookie season overweight and out of shape, setting the tone for a disappointing career that qualifies him as a mammoth bust given his draft position. Brushes with the law didn't exactly prolong his career, and he was out of the league after six seasons and 70 starts. **Pro Bowls:** None

3 BLAKE BORTLES
QB, UCF

Jacksonville (2014-18), L.A. Rams (2019-20), Denver (2020), Green Bay (2021), New Orleans (2021)

It's easy to mock Bortles as a classic reach and a consummate clipboard holder, but it's also easy to forget that he did lead the Jaguars to a close loss in the AFC Championship Game after the 2017 season. That brief flurry aside, Bortles had a pretty forgettable career, leading the league in interceptions in 2015 (although he did finish second to Tom Brady that season with 35 TD passes) and posting a starting record of 24-49. **Pro Bowls:** None

4 SAMMY WATKINS
WR, CLEMSON

Buffalo (2014-16), L.A. Rams (2017), Kansas City (2018-20), Baltimore (2021-22), Green Bay (2022)

A pioneer in the Clemson NFL WR pipeline, Watkins never stuck in any one place for very long, due in large part to his acknowledged struggles with mental health. He did excel for the Chiefs in their run to the Lombardi Trophy following the 2019 season, catching 14 passes for 288 yards in the three games and scoring a decisive touchdown in the AFC Championship Game. **Pro Bowls:** None

Kyle Terada-USA TODAY Sports

5 KHALIL MACK
LB, BUFFALO

Oakland (2014-17), Chicago (2018-21), L.A. Chargers (2022-23)

The first home-run pick of the 2014 NFL Draft came from an unlikely source — the Buffalo Bulls of the MAC — although Mack's eye-popping college numbers certainly helped his case (a record-tying 75 TFLs and a record 16 forced fumbles). In 2015, Mack became the first player to earn first-team All-Pro honors at two different positions (DE and OLB). His move to Chicago brought a slight decline in production, but he's enjoyed a resurgence in L.A. with a career-best 17.0 sacks in 2023. **Pro Bowls:** 8 (2015-20, 2022-23)

6 JAKE MATTHEWS
OT, TEXAS A&M

Atlanta (2014-23)

The son of Hall of Famer Bruce, Matthews has been a reliable if unspectacular fixture at left tackle for his decade in Atlanta and is one of four 2014 first-rounders who is still with the team that drafted him. He ended 2023 riding a streak of 161 consecutive regular-season starts, the longest active streak for a left tackle. Matthews is one of two players to have started every game since 2015 — joining Jason Kelce, who retired during the offseason — and has played in 162 of a possible 163 regular-season games. **Pro Bowls:** 1 (2018)

7 MIKE EVANS
WR, TEXAS A&M

Tampa Bay (2014-23)

This draft's Mr. Consistent (setting aside occasional struggles with embarrassing drops), Evans is the only player in NFL history with 1,000-plus receiving yards in each of his first 10 NFL seasons, and only Jerry Rice matches Evans with a 10-year streak of 1,000-yard seasons. When you mention a player alongside the GOAT, you know he's on a Hall of Fame track. Evans has posted double-digit TD catches in five of his 10 seasons. **Pro Bowls:** 5 (2016, 2018-19, 2021, 2023)

8 JUSTIN GILBERT
CB, OKLAHOMA STATE

Cleveland (2014-15), Pittsburgh (2016)

As has been their habit over the years, the Browns whiffed badly on their two first-round picks (more on the second in a moment). Gilbert's three-year career yielded all of three starts and one interception, embarrassing ROI for a top-10 pick. Gilbert didn't help himself with a substance abuse suspension following his 2017 release from Pittsburgh. He's currently trying his hand in Arena ball. **Pro Bowls:** None

9 ANTHONY BARR
CB, LB, UCLA

Minnesota (2014-21), Dallas (2022), Minnesota (2023)

Barr was a mainstay on the second level of the Minnesota defense for eight mostly productive seasons that included four straight Pro Bowls. Following a season in Dallas, he returned to the Vikings practice squad and was elevated to the active roster late in the 2023 season. An underrated playmaker, he has eight forced fumbles and five interceptions in his career. **Pro Bowls:** 4 (2015-18)

10 ERIC EBRON
TE, NORTH CAROLINA

Detroit (2014-17), Indianapolis (2018-19), Pittsburgh (2020-21)

The decorated North Carolina Tar Heel largely justified his status as the 2014 draft's top tight end prospect with some solid seasons in Detroit, Indy and Pittsburgh, reaching a peak in 2018 with career highs in catches (66), receiving yards (750) and TDs (13) in earning his lone Pro Bowl appearance. **Pro Bowls:** 1 (2018)

11 TAYLOR LEWAN
OT, MICHIGAN

Tennessee (2014-22)

Lewan overcame his reputation as something of a cheap-shot artist to become a fan favorite in Tennessee, where he made three Pro Bowls, although his later years were marred by injury and a banned substance suspension. His playing career seemingly over, Lewan has become a popular podcaster. Notably, Lewan has sued renowned orthopedist James Andrews over unsuccessful ACL surgery that hastened the end of his career. **Pro Bowls:** 3 (2016-18)

12 ODELL BECKHAM JR.
WR, LSU

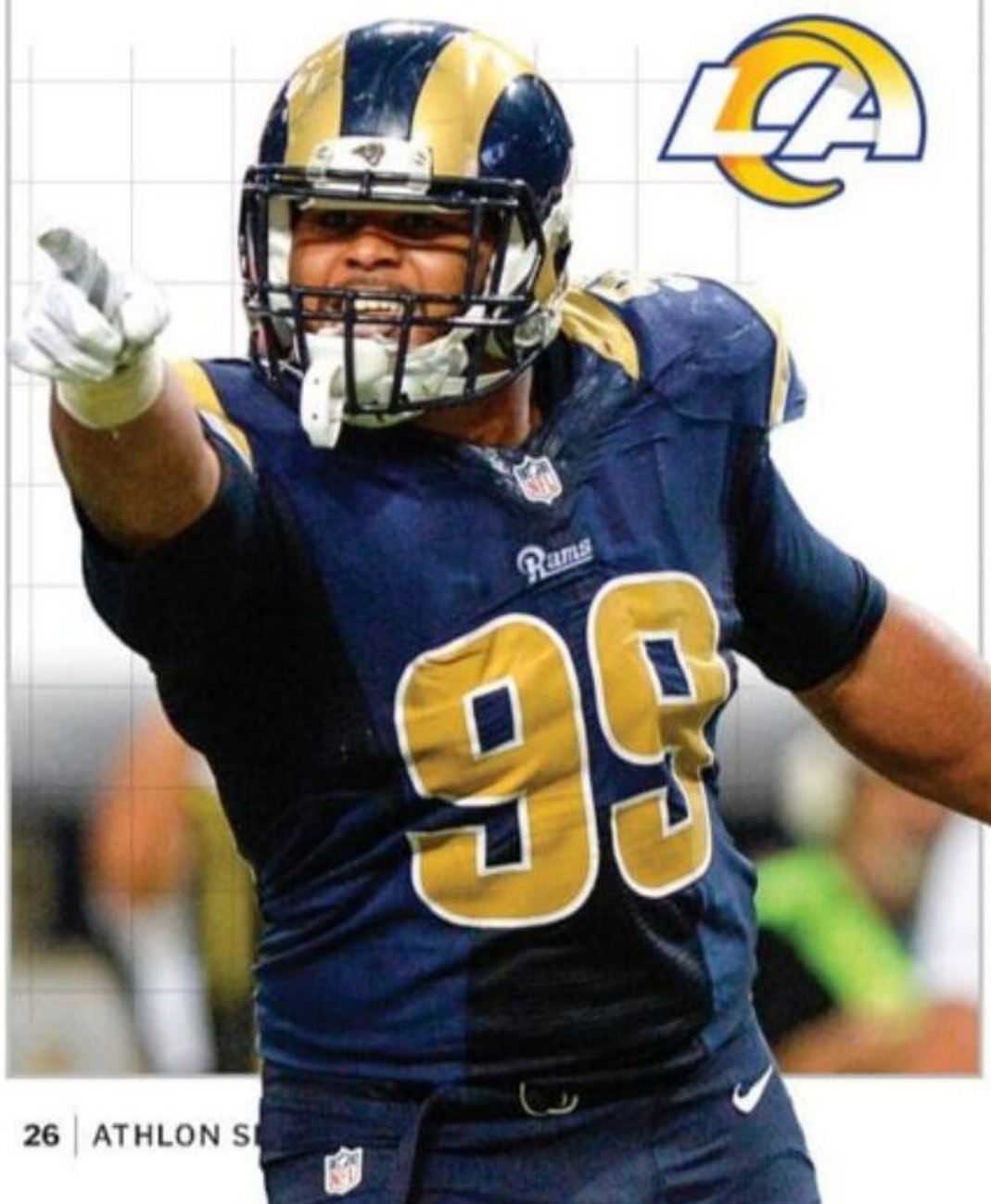
N.Y. Giants (2014-18), Cleveland (2019-21), L.A. Rams (2021), Baltimore (2023)

The most electrifying player in this draft, OBJ stormed out of the gate with a Rookie of the Year campaign and three Pro Bowls in his first three seasons; he also became the youngest player in history to grace a Madden cover (2016). But a fractured ankle in 2017 put him on a nomadic, injury-plagued track. He did win a ring with the Rams and scored the first TD of Super Bowl LVI — before tearing his ACL in the second quarter. **Pro Bowls:** 3 (2014-16)

13 AARON DONALD
DT, PITTSBURGH

St. Louis/L.A. Rams (2014-23)

This surefire Hall of Famer and recent retiree is arguably the greatest DT in NFL history, shaking off constant double- and triple-teams to notch 111.0 career sacks, an insane number for an interior D-lineman. The three-time NFL Defensive Player of the Year reached a personal peak in 2018, posting 20.5 sacks and 25 tackles for a loss in earning his second consecutive Defensive Player of the Year award. **Pro Bowls:** 10 (2014-23)



14 KYLE FULLER
CB, VIRGINIA TECH

Chicago (2014-20), Denver (2021), Baltimore (2022)

A member of a notable football family, Fuller forged a successful NFL career that peaked in 2018 with a career-best seven interceptions and a first-team All-Pro nod. A torn ACL in his first game with his hometown Ravens effectively ended a career in which Fuller posted 19 interceptions. **Pro Bowls:** 2 (2018-19)

15 RYAN SHAZIER
LB, OHIO STATE

Pittsburgh (2014-19)

Despite a successful career that included two Pro Bowls, Shazier is probably best remembered for the way his career ended — a frightening spinal injury on Monday Night Football that included initial paralysis. After fears that he might never walk again, Shazier recovered to dance at his wedding. In retirement, Shazier has become an advocate for cannabis as an alternative to opioid pain medications. **Pro Bowls:** 2 (2016-17)

16 ZACK MARTIN
OG, NOTRE DAME

Dallas (2014-23)

The highest-paid guard in NFL history, Martin joins Donald as a GOAT-in-waiting at his position from an otherwise middling draft. Arguably, only fellow Cowboy Larry Allen stands in his way as a challenger to the title of history's best guard. Martin has been called for only seven holding penalties in his career. **Pro Bowls:** 9 (2014-19, 2021-23)

Donald: Jeff Curry-USA TODAY Sports;
Martin: Tim Heitman-USA TODAY Sports

17 C.J. MOSLEY
LB, ALABAMA

Baltimore (2014-18), N.Y. Jets (2019-23)

After winning two national championships in his four seasons at Alabama, Mosley entered the league as a ready-made three-down defender. A tackle machine, Mosley has also been highly effective against the pass, with 12 career interceptions (including two pick-6s) and 53 passes defended. He remains a high-character leader and was a finalist for the 2023 Art Rooney Sportsmanship Award. **Pro Bowls:** 5 (2014, 2016-18, 2022)

18 CALVIN PRYOR
S, LOUISVILLE

N.Y. Jets (2014-16), Jacksonville (2017)

The Louisville Cardinals had a noteworthy Day 1 in 2014 with a school-record three first-round picks, but the return didn't justify the investment. Pryor did make the Pro Football Focus All-Rookie team, but he played in only 46 career games (38 starts) and intercepted only two passes in his career. **Pro Bowls:** None

19 JA'WUAN JAMES
OT, TENNESSEE

Miami (2014-18), Denver (2019-20), Baltimore (2021-22)

The Dolphins appeared to be reaching when they made James the fifth offensive lineman chosen; some had projected him as low as a third-rounder. And the naysayers were proved right to a degree, as James ended up at right tackle and started all 16 games only twice in his career. He also may go down as one of the worst free-agent signings in Denver history — after signing a four-year, $51 million deal, James played three games in two years for the Broncos due to injuries.
Pro Bowls: None

20 BRANDIN COOKS
WR, OREGON STATE

New Orleans (2014-16), New England (2017), L.A. Rams (2018-19), Houston (2020-22), Dallas (2023)

The 2013 Biletnikoff winner, Cooks embarked on a serviceable NFL career that has seen him play for five different franchises and contribute significantly to each. His team-hopping led to some unusual distinctions: He became the first player in NFL history with 1,000 receiving yards in three consecutive seasons with three different teams, and he joined Brandon Marshall as the only two players to post 1,000-yard receiving seasons with four different teams. **Pro Bowls:** None

21 HA HA CLINTON-DIX
S, ALABAMA

Green Bay (2014-18), Washington (2018), Chicago (2019), Las Vegas (2021)

Clinton-Dix had a seemingly unassailable college pedigree and appeared to be another can't-miss prospect from the Nick Saban factory. He never quite lived up to his billing for a Packers team that hoped he would fill a longstanding void at safety. His lone Pro Bowl season of 2016 saw him pick off five passes, but he was traded to Washington only two seasons later, and after a decent season in Chicago, his career was essentially over. **Pro Bowls:** 1 (2016)

22 JOHNNY MANZIEL
QB, TEXAS A&M

Cleveland (2014-15)

Johnny Football seemed worth a shot at the time, especially for a Browns franchise stuck on a decades-long QB treadmill. But Manziel was an epic bust whose antics and off-the-field issues overshadowed any flashes of on-field competence. His tenure yielded two victories in two seasons, and after stints in the CFL, AAF and even Fan Controlled Football, he was out of the game that gave him his nickname. **Pro Bowls:** None

23 DEE FORD
DE, AUBURN

Kansas City (2014-18), San Francisco (2019-21)

Ford's apparent breakout came in 2018, when he posted a career-high 13 sacks and tied for the NFL lead with seven forced fumbles. The Chiefs franchised and then traded him to the 49ers, however, and Ford was unable to return to those heights in San Francisco. He finished his career with 40 sacks, almost a third of those coming in that lone Pro Bowl season of 2018. **Pro Bowls:** 1 (2018)

24 DARQUEZE DENNARD
CB, MICHIGAN STATE

Cincinnati (2014-19), Atlanta (2020), N.Y. Giants (2021), San Francisco (2021)

The 2013 Jim Thorpe Award winner, Dennard was considered a possible top-10 pick before a mediocre 40 time at the Combine (4.51). He joined a crowded CB room and never emerged as anything more than passable, making only 24 starts in six seasons in Cincy and six more in Atlanta and finishing his career with four interceptions. **Pro Bowls:** None

25 JASON VERRETT
CB, TCU

San Diego/L.A. Chargers (2014-18), San Francisco (2019-22)

The fourth cornerback selected in the first round, Verrett lasted longer than some of his contemporaries and seemed to establish himself in his second season, intercepting three passes (with a pick-6) and defending 12 passes. But a coaching change and injuries derailed any momentum, and his career totals seem stuck on seven picks and 36 starts. **Pro Bowls:** 1 (2015)

26 MARCUS SMITH II
LB, LOUISVILLE

Philadelphia (2014-16), Seattle (2017), Washington (2018)

Another first-round bust from Louisville, Smith failed to start a single game in the NFL, although he did post 6.5 career sacks as a pass-rush specialist. He had 38 tackles and 14 QB hits in 53 career appearances. **Pro Bowls:None**

27 DEONE BUCANNON
S, WASHINGTON STATE

Arizona (2014-18), N.Y. Giants (2019), Tampa Bay (2019-20)

Bucannon had a few productive seasons with the Cardinals, but he actually picked up a Super Bowl ring in his final season in the league with Tampa — although he didn't appear in a single game that year. His best season was his second: 112 tackles, 3.0 sacks, a pick-6, three forced fumbles and a fumble recovery. **Pro Bowls:** None

28 KELVIN BENJAMIN
WR, FLORIDA STATE

Carolina (2014-17), Buffalo (2017-18), Kansas City (2018) Benjamin peaked as a rookie with 73 receptions, 1,008 yards and nine TDs, becoming the 11th wide receiver in NFL history with a 1,000-yard rookie campaign. After missing the 2015 season with a torn ACL, he had another productive campaign in 2016 (63 rec., 941 yds., 7 TDs), but he was traded to Buffalo in 2017, and his effort and output waned after that. He had 209 receptions and 20 TDs for his career. **Pro Bowls:** None

29 DOMINIQUE EASLEY
DT, FLORIDA

New England (2014-15), L.A. Rams (2016-18) An ACL tear in 2013 during his college career at Florida was a sign of things to come; Easley had a short, disappointing stint in the NFL due to continuous injury woes — in all, he suffered four torn ACLs during his football career. He finished with 64 tackles and an interception in only 41 career games. **Pro Bowls:** None

30 JIMMIE WARD
S, NO. ILLINOIS

San Francisco (2014-22), Houston (2023) The MAC's second first-rounder of 2014, Ward has carved out a respectable career as an effective tackler and reliable contributor on the back end. His best season was 2021: 16 starts, 77 tackles and two interceptions, including a pick-6. He made 11 tackles in the Niners' Super Bowl LIV loss to Kansas City. **Pro Bowls:** None

31 BRADLEY ROBY
CB, OHIO STATE

Denver (2014-18), Houston (2019-20), New Orleans (2021-22), Philadelphia (2023) Roby has proved to be a capable playmaker from his cornerback spot: 372 tackles, 11 interceptions, eight forced fumbles, seven fumble recoveries and 85 passes defended in his career. He defended three passes in Denver's Super Bowl 50 win over Carolina. **Pro Bowls:** None

32 TEDDY BRIDGEWATER
QB, LOUISVILLE

Minnesota (2014-17), New Orleans (2018-19), Carolina (2020), Denver (2021), Miami (2022), Detroit (2023) Bridgewater's promising career — he went 17-11 as the starting QB in his first two seasons — was derailed by a catastrophic non-contact knee injury prior to the 2016 season. To his considerable credit, Bridgewater returned from the injury to forge a respectable career as a backup and emergency fill-in (37 starts from 2018-22). He announced his retirement in late 2023 and his intention to enter the high school coaching ranks. **Pro Bowls:** 1 (2015)

BEST DRAFT → OAKLAND RAIDERS

The Raiders' haul laid the groundwork for a 2016 season that saw the end of a 13-year playoff drought. The group didn't necessarily have staying power, but in the short term, the class paid huge dividends. Khalil Mack was a genius pick; second-rounder Derek Carr stabilized the QB situation; third-rounder Gabe Jackson was a solid guard for seven seasons with the franchise; and fourth-rounder Justin Ellis was an All-Rookie pick.

WORST DRAFT → CLEVELAND BROWNS

Two first-rounders, two colossal busts. That makes this the easiest call we've made since we started doing this annual rundown many years ago. Cornerback Justin Gilbert looked like a safe pick after a stellar career at Oklahoma State, but he never found his footing in the pro game. And Johnny Manziel? The diminutive Johnny Football was a Tebow-esque reach even in the moment and a franchise-defining mistake in the long term. The one saving grace: guard Joel Bitonio, a Browns lifer and five-time Pro Bowler. But a guard can't make up for two historic first-round blunders.

BEST PICKS

Round 2 — Pick 53
DAVANTE ADAMS, WR | Fresno State (Green Bay)
One might be tempted to credit Aaron Rodgers for much of Adams' success in Green Bay, but the big-bodied wideout has been virtually as unstoppable with Derek Carr, Aidan O'Connell, Jimmy Garoppolo and Brian Hoyer as he was with the Packers legend. Adams is the active leader in TD receptions with 95.

Round 3 — Pick 96
JERICK MCKINNON, RB | Georgia Southern (Minnesota)
In a draft that was largely bereft of later-round gems, McKinnon stands out for the fact that he's still around and still producing, albeit in a situational role. He has amassed 602 scrimmage yards in nine postseason games.

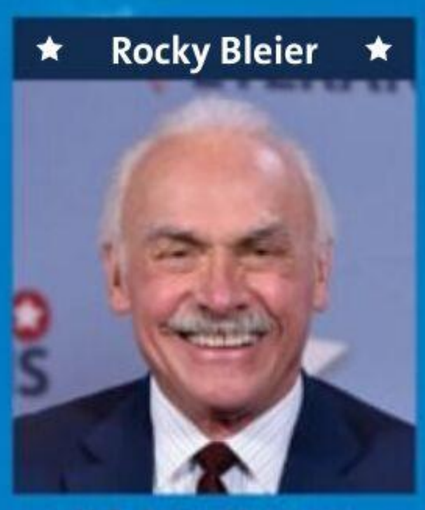
Round 4 — Pick 130
JAMES WHITE, RB | Wisconsin (New England)
White was the prototypical Bill Belichick running back, a three-down threat who has played in 12 postseason games and won three Super Bowl rings. For his career, he had 4,556 yards from scrimmage and 36 touchdowns.

Round 5 — Pick 151
AVERY WILLIAMSON, LB | Kentucky (Tennessee)
In 96 games (85 starts), Williamson produced 607 tackles, 29 TFLs, 17 passes defended and four interceptions. Not bad numbers for a fifth-rounder. In 2017, his last season in Tennessee, he ranked 10th among qualifying linebackers per Pro Football Focus.

Round 6 — Pick 200
LAURENT DUVERNAY-TARDIF, OT | McGill (Kansas City)
Duvernay-Tardif was not just an excellent player, starting 64 games and winning a Super Bowl Ring; he was also a remarkable story, becoming the fourth NFL player to graduate from medical school. Duvernay-Tardif earned his M.D. degree from McGill in 2018, giving him a nice fallback option since his retirement in September 2023.

Round 7 — Pick 246
CHARLES LENO JR., OT | Boise State (Chicago)
A seven-year starter at the all-important left tackle spot qualifies as a late-round gem, don't you think? Leno, who made the Pro Bowl in 2018, started 141 games in his 10-year career — 94 for Chicago and 47 for Washington.

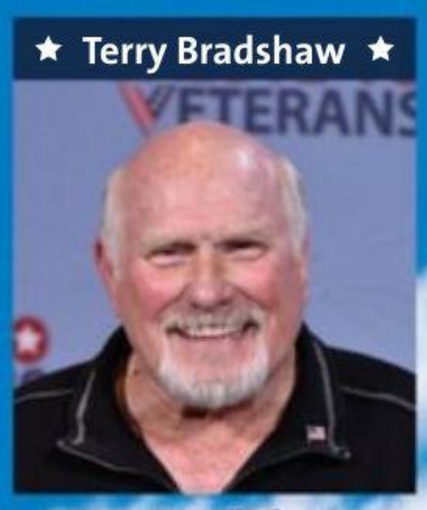
SALUTE TO VETERANS



★ Rocky Bleier ★

U.S. Army Veteran,
4-time Champion,
Pittsburgh

U.S.ARMY



★ Terry Bradshaw ★

TV Host & Hall of Famer,
4-time Champion,
Pittsburgh

★ Greg Gadson ★

U.S. Army Veteran,
Honorary Captain,
2-time Champion with New York

U.S.ARMY

★ Alejandro Villanueva ★

U.S. Army Veteran,
2-time Pro Bowler,
Baltimore

U.S.ARMY

★ Joe Cardona ★

U.S. Navy Veteran,
2-time Champion,
New England

U.S. NAVY

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2024

DRAFT RECAP

2024 NFL DRAFT PICKS

ROUND 1

1	Bears	**Caleb Williams**	QB	USC
2	Commanders	**Jayden Daniels**	QB	LSU
3	Patriots	**Drake Maye**	QB	North Carolina
4	Cardinals	**Marvin Harrison Jr.**	WR	Ohio State
5	Chargers	**Joe Alt**	OT	Notre Dame
6	Giants	**Malik Nabers**	WR	LSU
7	Titans	**JC Latham**	OT	Alabama
8	Falcons	**Michael Penix Jr.**	QB	Washington
9	Bears	**Rome Odunze**	WR	Washington
10	Vikings	**J.J. McCarthy**	QB	Michigan
11	Jets	**Olu Fashanu**	OT	Penn State
12	Broncos	**Bo Nix**	QB	Oregon
13	Raiders	**Brock Bowers**	TE	Georgia
14	Saints	**Taliese Fuaga**	OT	Oregon State
15	Colts	**Laiatu Latu**	Edge	UCLA
16	Seahawks	**Byron Murphy II**	DT	Texas
17	Vikings	**Dallas Turner**	Edge	Alabama
18	Bengals	**Amarius Mims**	OT	Georgia
19	Rams	**Jared Verse**	Edge	Florida State
20	Steelers	**Troy Fautanu**	OG	Washington
21	Dolphins	**Chop Robinson**	Edge	Penn State
22	Eagles	**Quinyon Mitchell**	CB	Toledo
23	Jaguars	**Brian Thomas Jr.**	WR	LSU
24	Lions	**Terrion Arnold**	CB	Alabama
25	Packers	**Jordan Morgan**	OT	Arizona

ADONAI MITCHELL

CALEB WILLIAMS

26	Buccaneers	**Graham Barton**	C	Duke
27	Cardinals	**Darius Robinson**	Edge	Missouri
28	Chiefs	**Xavier Worthy**	WR	Texas
29	Cowboys	**Tyler Guyton**	OT	Oklahoma
30	Ravens	**Nate Wiggins**	CB	Clemson
31	49ers	**Ricky Pearsall**	WR	Florida
32	Panthers	**Xavier Legette**	WR	South Carolina

ROUND 2

33	Bills	**Keon Coleman**	WR	Florida State
34	Chargers	**Ladd McConkey**	WR	Georgia
35	Falcons	**Ruke Orhorhoro**	DT	Clemson
36	Commanders	**Jer'Zhan Newton**	DT	Illinois
37	Patriots	**Ja'Lynn Polk**	WR	Washington
38	Titans	**T'Vondre Sweat**	DT	Texas
39	Rams	**Braden Fiske**	DT	Florida State
40	Eagles	**Cooper DeJean**	CB	Iowa
41	Saints	**Kool-Aid McKinstry**	CB	Alabama
42	Texans	**Kamari Lassiter**	CB	Georgia
43	Cardinals	**Max Melton**	CB	Rutgers
44	Raiders	**Jackson Powers-Johnson**	C	Oregon
45	Packers	**Edgerrin Cooper**	LB	Texas A&M
46	Panthers	**Jonathon Brooks**	RB	Texas
47	Giants	**Tyler Nubin**	S	Minnesota
48	Jaguars	**Maason Smith**	DT	LSU
49	Bengals	**Kris Jenkins**	DT	Michigan
50	Commanders	**Mike Sainristil**	CB	Michigan
51	Steelers	**Zach Frazier**	C	West Virginia
52	Colts	**Adonai Mitchell**	WR	Texas
53	Commanders	**Ben Sinnott**	TE	Kansas State
54	Browns	**Michael Hall Jr.**	DT	Ohio State
55	Dolphins	**Patrick Paul**	DT	Houston
56	Cowboys	**Marshawn Kneeland**	Edge	Western Michigan
57	Buccaneers	**Chris Braswell**	Edge	Alabama
58	Packers	**Javon Bullard**	S	Georgia
59	Texans	**Blake Fisher**	OT	Notre Dame
60	Bills	**Cole Bishop**	S	Utah
61	Lions	**Ennis Rakestraw II**	CB	Missouri
62	Ravens	**Roger Rosegarten**	OT	Washington
63	Chiefs	**Kingsley Suamataia**	OT	BYU
64	49ers	**Renardo Green**	CB	Florida State

WILLIAMS: JASON PARKHURST-USA TODAY SPORTS; MITCHELL: AARON E. MARTINEZ/AMERICAN-STATESMAN

ROUND 3

65	Jets	**Malachi Corley**	WR	WKU
66	Cardinals	**Trey Benson**	RB	Florida State
67	Commanders	**Brandon Coleman**	OG	TCU
68	Patriots	**Caedan Wallace**	OT	Penn State
69	Chargers	**Junior Colson**	LB	Michigan
70	Giants	**Andru Phillips**	CB	Kentucky
71	Cardinals	**Isaiah Adams**	OT	Illinois
72	Panthers	**Trevin Wallace**	LB	Kentucky
73	Cowboys	**Cooper Beebe**	OG	Kansas State
74	Falcons	**Bralen Trice**	Edge	Washington
75	Bears	**Kiran Amegadjie**	OT	Yale
76	Broncos	**Jonah Elliss**	Edge	Utah
77	Raiders	**Delman Glaze**	OT	Maryland
78	Texans	**Calen Bullock**	S	USC
79	Colts	**Matt Goncalves**	OT	Pittsburgh
80	Bengals	**Jermaine Burton**	WR	Alabama
81	Seahawks	**Christian Haynes**	OG	Connecticut
82	Cardinals	**Tip Reiman**	TE	Illinois
83	Rams	**Blake Corum**	RB	Michigan
84	Steelers	**Roman Wilson**	WR	Michigan
85	Browns	**Zac Zinter**	OG	Michigan
86	49ers	**Dominick Puni**	OT	Kansas
87	Cowboys	**Marist Liufau**	LB	Notre Dame
88	Packers	**MarShawn Lloyd**	RB	USC
89	Buccaneers	**Tykee Smith**	S	Georgia
90	Cardinals	**Elijah Jones**	CB	Boston College
91	Packers	**Ty'Ron Hopper**	LB	Missouri
92	Buccaneers	**Jalen McMillan**	WR	Washington
93	Ravens	**Adisa Isaac**	LB	Penn State
94	Eagles	**Jalyx Hunt**	Edge	Houston Christian
95	Bills	**DeWayne Carter**	DT	Duke
96	Jaguars	**Jarrian Jones**	CB	Florida State
97	Bengals	**McKinnley Jackson**	DT	Texas A&M
98	Steelers	**Payton Wilson**	LB	NC State
99	Rams	**Kamren Kinchens**	S	Miami (Fla.)
100	Commanders	**Luke McCaffrey**	WR	Rice

ROUND 4

101	Panthers	**Ja'Tavion Sanders**	TE	Texas
102	Broncos	**Troy Franklin**	WR	Oregon
103	Patriots	**Layden Robinson**	OG	Texas A&M
104	Cardinals	**Dadrion Taylor-Demerson**	S	Texas Tech
105	Chargers	**Justin Eboigbe**	DT	Alabama
106	Titans	**Cedric Gray**	LB	North Carolina
107	Giants	**Theo Johnson**	TE	Penn State
108	Vikings	**Khyree Jackson**	CB	Oregon
109	Falcons	**Brandon Dorlus**	DT	Oregon
110	Patriots	**Javon Baker**	WR	UCF
111	Packers	**Evan Williams**	S	Oregon
112	Raiders	**Decamerion Richardson**	CB	Mississippi State
113	Ravens	**Devontez Walker**	WR	North Carolina
114	Jaguars	**Javon Foster**	OT	Missouri
115	Bengals	**Erick All**	TE	Iowa
116	Jaguars	**Jordan Jefferson**	DT	LSU
117	Colts	**Tanor Bortolini**	C	Wisconsin
118	Seahawks	**Tyrice Knight**	LB	UTEP
119	Steelers	**Mason McCormick**	OG	South Dakota St.
120	Dolphins	**Jaylen Wright**	RB	Tennessee
121	Seahawks	**AJ Barner**	TE	Michigan
122	Bears	**Tory Taylor**	P	Iowa
123	Texans	**Cade Stover**	TE	Ohio State
124	49ers	**Malik Mustapha**	S	Wake Forest
125	Buccaneers	**Bucky Irving**	RB	Oregon
126	Lions	**Giovanni Manu**	OT	British Columbia
127	Eagles	**Will Shipley**	RB	Clemson
128	Bills	**Ray Davis**	RB	Kentucky
129	49ers	**Isaac Guerendo**	RB	Louisville
130	Ravens	**T.J. Tampa**	CB	Iowa State
131	Chiefs	**Jared Wiley**	TE	TCU
132	Lions	**Sione Vaki**	S	Utah
133	Chiefs	**Jaden Hicks**	S	Washington State
134	Jets	**Braelon Allen**	RB	Wisconsin
135	49ers	**Jacob Cowing**	WR	Arizona

BENSON: BOB DONNAN-USA TODAY SPORTS; DAVIS: MATT STONE/THE COURIER JOURNAL

ROUND 5

136	Seahawks	**Nehemiah Pritchett**	CB	Auburn
137	Chargers	**Tarheeb Still**	CB	Maryland
138	Cardinals	**Xavier Thomas**	Edge	Clemson
139	Commanders	**Jordan Magee**	LB	Temple
140	Chargers	**Cam Hart**	CB	Notre Dame
141	Bills	**Sedrick Van Pran-Granger**	C	Georgia
142	Colts	**Anthony Gould**	WR	Oregon State
143	Falcons	**JD Bertrand**	LB	Notre Dame
144	Bears	**Austin Booker**	Edge	Kansas
145	Broncos	**Kris Abrams-Draine**	CB	Missouri
146	Titans	**Jarvis Brownlee Jr.**	CB	Louisville
147	Broncos	**Audric Estime**	RB	Notre Dame
148	Raiders	**Tommy Eichenberg**	LB	Ohio State
149	Bengals	**Josh Newton**	CB	TCU
150	Saints	**Spencer Rattler**	QB	South Carolina
151	Colts	**Jaylon Carlies**	S	Missouri
152	Eagles	**Ainias Smith**	WR	Texas A&M
153	Jaguars	**Deantre Prince**	CB	Ole Miss
154	Rams	**Brennan Jackson**	Edge	Washington State
155	Eagles	**Jeremiah Trotter Jr.**	LB	Clemson
156	Browns	**Jamari Thrash**	WR	Louisville
157	Panthers	**Chau Smith-Wade**	CB	Washington State
158	Dolphins	**Mohamed Kamara**	Edge	Colorado State
159	Chiefs	**Hunter Nourzad**	C	Penn State
160	Bills	**Edefuan Ulofoshio**	LB	Washington
161	Commanders	**Dominique Hampton**	S	Washington
162	Cardinals	**Christian Jones**	OT	Texas
163	Packers	**Jacob Monk**	C	Duke
164	Colts	**Jaylin Simpson**	S	Auburn

SPENCER RATTLER

165	Ravens	**Rasheen Ali**	RB	Marshall
166	Giants	**Tyrone Tracy Jr.**	RB	Purdue
167	Jaguars	**Keilan Robinson**	RB	Texas
168	Bills	**Javon Solomon**	Edge	Troy
169	Packers	**Kitan Oladapo**	S	Oregon State
170	Saints	**Bub Means**	WR	Pittsburgh
171	Jets	**Jordan Travis**	QB	Florida State
172	Eagles	**Trevor Keegan**	OG	Michigan
173	Jets	**Isaiah Davis**	RB	South Dakota St.
174	Cowboys	**Caelen Carson**	CB	Wake Forest
175	Saints	**Jaylan Ford**	LB	Texas
176	Jets	**Qwan'tez Stiggers**	CB	Toronto Argonauts

ROUND 6

177	Vikings	**Walter Rouse**	OT	Oklahoma
178	Steelers	**Logan Lee**	DT	Iowa
179	Seahawks	**Sataoa Laumea**	OG	Utah
180	Patriots	**Marcellas Dial**	CB	South Carolina
181	Chargers	**Kimani Vidal**	RB	Troy
182	Titans	**Jha'Quan Jackson**	WR	Tulane
183	Giants	**Darius Muasau**	LB	UCLA
184	Dolphins	**Malik Washington**	WR	Virginia
185	Eagles	**Johnny Wilson**	WR	Florida State
186	Falcons	**Jase McClellan**	RB	Alabama
187	Falcons	**Casey Washington**	WR	Illinois
188	Texans	**Jamal Hill**	LB	Oregon
189	Lions	**Mekhi Wingo**	DT	LSU
190	Eagles	**Dylan McMahon**	OG	NC State
191	Cardinals	**Tejhaun Palmer**	WR	UAB
192	Seahawks	**D.J. James**	CB	Auburn
193	Patriots	**Joe Milton III**	QB	Tennessee
194	Bengals	**Tanner McLachlan**	TE	Arizona
195	Steelers	**Ryan Watts**	CB	Texas
196	Rams	**Tyler Davis**	DT	Clemson
197	Falcons	**Zion Logue**	DT	Georgia
198	Dolphins	**Patrick McMorris**	S	California
199	Saints	**Khristian Boyd**	DT	Northern Iowa
200	Panthers	**Jaden Crumedy**	DT	Mississippi State
201	Colts	**Micah Abraham**	CB	Marshall
202	Packers	**Travis Glover**	OT	Georgia State
203	Vikings	**Will Reichard**	PK	Alabama

MALIK WASHINGTON

RATTLER: JEFF BLAKE-USA TODAY SPORTS; WASHINGTON: SAM NAVARRO-USA TODAY SPORTS

204	Bills	**Tylan Grable**	OT	UCF
205	Texans	**Jawhar Jordan**	RB	Louisville
206	Browns	**Nathaniel Watson**	LB	Mississippi State
207	Seahawks	**Michael Jerrell**	OT	Findlay
208	Raiders	**Dylan Laube**	RB	New Hampshire
209	Rams	**Joshua Karty**	PK	Stanford
210	Lions	**Christian Mahogany**	OG	Boston College
211	Chiefs	**Kamal Hadden**	CB	Tennessee
212	Jaguars	**Cam Little**	PK	Arkansas
213	Rams	**Jordan Whittington**	WR	Texas
214	Bengals	**Cedric Johnson**	Edge	Ole Miss
215	49ers	**Jarrett Kingston**	OG	USC
216	Cowboys	**Ryan Flournoy**	WR	SE Missouri St.
217	Rams	**Beaux Limmer**	C	Arkansas
218	Ravens	**Devin Leary**	QB	Kentucky
219	Bills	**Daequan Hardy**	CB	Penn State
220	Buccaneers	**Elijah Klein**	OG	UTEP

MICHAEL PRATT

CEDRIC JOHNSON

ROUND 7

221	Bills	**Travis Clayton**	OG	England
222	Commanders	**Javontae Jean-Baptiste**	Edge	Notre Dame
223	Raiders	**Trey Taylor**	S	Air Force
224	Bengals	**Daijahn Anthony**	S	Ole Miss
225	Chargers	**Brenden Rice**	WR	USC
226	Cardinals	**Jaden Davis**	CB	Miami (Fla.)
227	Browns	**Myles Harden**	CB	South Dakota
228	Ravens	**Nick Samac**	C	Michigan State
229	Raiders	**M.J. Devonshire**	CB	Pittsburgh
230	Vikings	**Michael Jurgens**	C	Wake Forest
231	Patriots	**Jaheim Bell**	TE	Florida State
232	Vikings	**Levi Drake Rodriguez**	DT	Texas A&M-Commerce
233	Cowboys	**Nathan Thomas**	OT	Louisiana
234	Colts	**Jonah Laulu**	DT	Oklahoma
235	Broncos	**Devaughn Vele**	WR	Utah
236	Jaguars	**Myles Cole**	Edge	Texas Tech
237	Bengals	**Matt Lee**	C	Miami (Fla.)
238	Texans	**Solomon Byrd**	Edge	USC
239	Saints	**Josiah Ezirim**	OT	Eastern Kentucky
240	Panthers	**Michael Barrett**	LB	Michigan
241	Dolphins	**Tahj Washington**	WR	USC
242	Titans	**James Williams**	S	Miami (Fla.)
243	Browns	**Jowon Briggs**	DT	Cincinnati
244	Cowboys	**Justin Rogers**	DT	Auburn
245	Packers	**Michael Pratt**	QB	Tulane
246	Buccaneers	**Devin Culp**	TE	Washington
247	Texans	**Marcus Harris**	DT	Auburn
248	Chiefs	**C.J. Hanson**	OG	Holy Cross
249	Texans	**LaDarius Henderson**	OT	Michigan
250	Ravens	**Sanoussi Kane**	S	Purdue
251	49ers	**Tatum Bethune**	LB	Florida State
252	Titans	**Jaylen Harrell**	Edge	Michigan
253	Chargers	**Cornelius Johnson**	WR	Michigan
254	Rams	**KT Leveston**	OG	Kansas State
255	Packers	**Kalen King**	CB	Penn State
256	Broncos	**Nick Gargiulo**	C	South Carolina
257	Jets	**Jaylen Key**	S	Alabama

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2024

NFL DRAFT

Motor City Mayhem

BY BRYAN FISCHER

It wasn't long ago that the NFL Draft represented a yearly sliver of hope amid on-field despair for Detroit Lions fans accustomed to a mediocre product on the field. Nowadays, however, such desolation is no longer the norm for those in silver and blue. The Lions are one of the top contenders in the NFC and fresh off a pair of playoff wins — the franchise's first since the 1991 season. There is momentum, and plenty of it, in the city and beyond.

The taste of on-field success hasn't dampened the area's enthusiasm for the league's marquee offseason event one bit, though. As the traveling draft roadshow arrived in Detroit for another midwestern stint this year, an estimated record crowd of 775,000 people — including a remarkable 275,000 on Day 1 — braved chilly weather to cram into downtown

Eminem (right) helped welcome the throng to the proceedings.

and celebrate the NFL Draft, welcoming in an exciting new wave of prospects.

While all 32 teams were well represented among a sea of supporters, the hometown fans made themselves heard throughout draft weekend. This was particularly evident amid a parade of appearances from local celebrities such as Eminem, current (Aidan Hutchinson, among others) and former (Barry Sanders) Lions strolling to the main stage, and, of course, when the boos rained down as commissioner Roger Goodell announced that rival Chicago was on the clock with the first pick.

Lions first-rounder Terrion Arnold

To no one's surprise, the Bears used their first No. 1 overall selection since 1947 on a new quarterback of the future in USC's Caleb Williams. The dazzling Heisman Trophy winner had been penciled in for the pick for much of the past two years and seemed cemented as the choice of GM Ryan Poles from the moment the team traded away Justin Fields earlier in the offseason.

The first signal-caller taken typically defines the narrative surrounding a draft, but Williams' potential in the Windy City may be less of the top headline for the 2024 class given just how many of his peers joined him as part of a historic quarterback run in Detroit. The Commanders nabbed LSU's Jayden Daniels No. 2 overall — making it back-to-back Heisman winners atop the draft for only the second time (2015) ever — while No. 3 pick Drake Maye of North Carolina will become the face of a new regime for the Patriots.

As predictable as that 1-2-3 order was, it was the Falcons who delivered one of the bigger draft day shocks by taking Michael Penix Jr. eighth. The reaction around the league was one of bewilderment — not because of any lack of talent, but rather because the pick came in the wake of Atlanta giving Kirk Cousins a four-year, $180 million contract just 43 days prior. GM Terry Fontenot said the decision was a move made for the franchise's future, but it was by far the most criticized pick of the entire draft — a sentiment likely to continue for several years, no matter how well the team performs.

Not to be outdone in searching for a solution to the most important position on the field, the Vikings took national-title winner J.J. McCarthy 10th overall, and the Broncos took Bo Nix at No. 12.

ERIC SEALS

KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS

Those six quarterbacks — all taken in the first dozen picks -— matched the positional record in the first round set back in 1983. That draft, legendarily referenced as the QB Class of'83, saw four players go on to play in the Super Bowl and included Hall of Famers John Elway, Jim Kelly and Dan Marino. No pressure on the 2024 sextet trying to clear that kind of bar, though interestingly there was not a single quarterback taken between rounds 2-4 for just the second time ever.

Still, teams clearly were leaning in one direction during this year's draft, as the first 14 picks of the first round were all offensive players — a new record for consecutive selections on one side of the ball. The 23 total offensive players taken in the first round shattered the previous high-water mark of 19, and all told, 52 percent of the 257 total picks in this year's draft tilted toward the offensive side of the ball.

Perhaps it was no surprise, then, that a record-tying seven wideouts were taken in the first round alone to help boost those numbers. While the likes of Marvin Harrison Jr. (fourth to the Cardinals) and Malik Nabers (sixth to the Giants) led the way among impact pass-catchers, the Bears nabbing Rome Odunze ninth overall may have been the most preordained pick of the bunch after the ex-Washington star flew to Detroit on the same flight as his new quarterback and set social media alight with posts documenting such a prescient pre-draft coincidence.

As much as the combination of Williams and Odunze could turn into something special over the coming years, fans around the league may have been less delighted to see the Chiefs pick Xavier Worthy 28th overall. The Texas receiver set an NFL Scouting Combine record with a 4.21 40-yard dash a few months prior and gives Patrick Mahomes a speedy weapon who shores up one of the few weaknesses of the reigning Super Bowl champions.

The latest batch of players to enter the league should only reinforce the fact that the draft marks that rare moment in time where all 32 franchises have the same record and an equal amount of hope for future success.

BALL-CARRIERS GO BEGGING

Amid the ongoing conversation in league circles over the value of the running back position, this year's draft only further reinforced the depressed significance of ball-carriers with Texas tailback Jonathon Brooks (second round, 46th overall) being the lone player taken at the position during the first two rounds — a first in draft history since the AFL-NFL merger and just the third time ever that there were no first-round RBs. Brooks' selection narrowly avoided matching the latest a first running back was drafted too, with the record set back in 2014, when Bishop Sankey was first running back off the board at No. 54 overall.

GENERATIONAL PICKS

The 2024 NFL Draft was a family affair in more ways than one, with several picks evoking a wave of nostalgia (plus a few old highlights) upon hearing a familiar last name called out in Detroit this year.

▶ **Marvin Harrison Jr.** (fourth overall to Arizona) joined his Hall of Fame father Marvin Harrison Sr. (19th overall to Indianapolis) as a first-round pick and also became the fourth Ohio State receiver drafted in the first round in just the last three years.

▶ Immediately after Harrison Jr., the Chargers selected Notre Dame OT Joe Alt — the son of former Chiefs tackle Joe Alt (21st overall in 1984) — fifth overall to give the NFL 11 father-son selections in the first round since 1967.

▶ New Bengals DL Kris Jenkins went 49th overall, five spots later in the draft than his father, a former Panthers second-round pick who shares the same name. Kris' uncle Cullen Jenkins also spent more than a decade in the NFL and won Super Bowl XLV with the Packers.

▶ Former Utah pass-rusher Jonah Elliss is the son of 1995 first-round pick Luther Elliss and was drafted in the third round by the Broncos, the franchise where his father ended his career.

▶ Commanders third-rounder Luke McCaffrey was drafted later than both his father Ed McCaffrey (83rd overall) and first-round brother Christian McCaffrey.

▶ Eagles fans may still be able to fish out some old jerseys to celebrate the selection of Jeremiah Trotter Jr. in the fifth round as he attempts to follow in the footsteps of his All-Pro father, whom the team drafted back in 1998.

▶ Nobody has bigger shoes to fill than those of Chargers seventh-rounder Brenden Rice. The former USC receiver is the son of Hall of Famer Jerry Rice, a 1985 first-rounder who holds numerous NFL records.

DRAFT ON!

NFL personnel have been regulars at USC for decades, and the **Trojans celebrated a historic week for the cardinal and gold with Williams becoming the sixth No. 1 overall pick** for the program. That's a new record for one school, breaking a previous tie with Oklahoma that Williams' coach, Lincoln Riley, had something to do with. The 40-year-old Riley made some history of his own during the draft when his star pupil was taken by the Bears; he became the first coach in college football history to coach three No. 1 overall picks. Riley previously developed Baker Mayfield (2018) and Kyler Murray (2019) prior to working with Williams in both Norman and Los Angeles the past three years.

The Trojans also furthered their own streak of having a player picked in every draft since 1939, a record 86-year run they share with future conference rival Michigan. Interestingly, while USC was responsible for having the first offensive player off the board this year, the first defensive player in the draft came from across town at UCLA when the Indianapolis Colts nabbed edge rusher Laiatu Latu with the 15th overall pick. Though few will know who else general manager Chris Ballard may have considered with the selection, it probably didn't hurt that the Lombardi Award winner racked up 3.5 sacks of Williams over the past two years.

DRAFT DROUGHT FINALLY ENDS

Perhaps no team in the NFL relished its Night 1 pick more than the Los Angeles Rams. The franchise has been an afterthought early in the draft considering they haven't had a first-round selection since 2016, so you could forgive the front office for savoring the opportunity to grab Jared Verse 19th overall a bit more than normal. The Florida State pass rusher was also the very first first-round pick for Sean McVay — despite the head coach having made two trips to the Super Bowl during his time in Los Angeles and memorably coming away with a ring in 2022.

Just as cool as the Hermosa Beach house that the Rams used as draft headquarters for the pick was the fact that the team took Verse's fellow Seminole defensive lineman Braden Fiske in the second round — and somehow managed to hustle their top pick through local traffic from the airport just in time to get the two teammates on the phone together while things were made official with the league office. Not bad for a franchise lacking first-round experience.

MICHIGAN MEN

Prior to the start of the 2023 college football season, then-Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh told reporters that he thought the Wolverines had a chance to break the all-time draft record of 15 players from a single school.

That didn't quite come to pass, but the team affectionately known around Ann Arbor as Team 144 still managed to come close, setting the program's high-water mark with 13 players drafted on the heels of a national championship campaign. Impressively, seven players went in the first 100 picks alone, highlighted by J.J. McCarthy, who became the first Michigan QB drafted in the first round since Harbaugh was taken in 1987.

Harbaugh himself also helped contribute to that overall total in his new spot in Los Angeles, with the Chargers' new head coach even bursting out an impromptu, rousing rendition of "Hail to the Victors" after the franchise took linebacker Junior Colson in the third round. Fellow Wolverine Cornelius Johnson also headed West as a seventh-round pick for the team.

KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS

SABAN SIGNS OFF

If you caught some of the draft coverage on television this year, there was a new analyst contributing sharp opinions who may have captured your attention in Detroit: a retired coach who knows a thing or two about both college football and the NFL in Nick Saban.

The former Alabama head coach appeared as part of ABC's telecast, and his best analysis was naturally centered on his former players — of whom there was no shortage drafted yet again.

The 2024 draft marked the 13th consecutive year that the Tide had at least seven players drafted, a run made even more impressive by the fact that only Michigan (two) and Georgia (six) can claim active streaks of sending that many players to the league. **OT JC Latham going seventh overall to the Tennessee Titans doubled as Saban's 50th first-round draft pick across 28 years as a head coach** (Dallas Turner and Terrion Arnold added to the total), while third-rounder Jermaine Burton was the 106th player coached by Saban drafted in the top 100 over the course of his career.

In what is also sure to someday be the answer to a trivia question, Alabama safety Jaylen Key earned the distinction of not only becoming Mr. Irrelevant as the final pick in the 2024 NFL Draft when the Jets selected him No. 257 overall, but also doubling as the last of an amazing 172 draft picks who were tutored by Saban over the past three decades.

ODUNZE: DAVID BANKS-USA TODAY SPORTS; LATHAM: KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS

POWER SEPARATION

MOST PICKS BY LEAGUE

League	Picks
SEC	59
Pac-12	43
Big Ten	42
ACC	41
Big 12	31
FCS	11
FBS Indep.	8
Sun Belt	6
AAC	5
CUSA	3
MAC	2
MWC	2
Canada	2
DII	1
England	1

If you've developed a soft spot for a player drafted from a small school, you might want to savor such an increasingly rare breed even more. In a clear example of changing regulations surrounding transferring and NIL having an impact on players being produced for the next level, a whopping 87 percent of players drafted in 2024 played in one of the Power 5 conferences or Notre Dame.

The SEC once again led the way in terms of draft picks by conference, the 18th straight year they've been able to claim the distinction. The league where it just means more (draft picks) also had the most first-rounders for the 13th time in the last 14 years.

Just as notable was the Pac-12 finishing second to cap off the conference's gridiron swan song. The 43 picks from out West, including No. 1 overall Williams, were most in Pac-12 history since the draft moved to its current seven-round format and topped the previous high of 39 in 2015.

No. 9 overall pick
Rome Odunze

CFP MEANS NFL

In addition to the stellar class Michigan sent to the league, it was notable just how much the NFL seemed to be paying attention to players who had performed on the big stage of the College Football Playoff. An impressive 17 percent of all players drafted in 2024 played in the football version of the Final Four, and 23 draftees took the field for the national title game.

Big 12 champion Texas' resurgence on the national scene under head coach Steve Sarkisian has been noticed by scouts, with the Horns having two players drafted in the first round for the first time since 2007. The 11 overall selections were the school's most since the 12-round 1984 draft.

National runner-up Washington showcased why its run to the title game was fueled by future pros, too, notching double-digit picks for the first time since 1998 and having seven players taken inside the top 100 (all on offense). The Huskies also became, along with LSU this year, the first programs in the common draft era to have a quarterback and wide receiver selected in the top 10 in Michael Penix Jr. and Rome Odunze.

MOST PICKS BY SCHOOL

School	Picks
Michigan	13
Texas	11
Alabama	10
Florida State	10
Washington	10
Georgia	8
Oregon	8
Penn State	8
Notre Dame	7
USC	7
Clemson	6
LSU	6
Missouri	6
Auburn	5
Utah	5

2025

DRAFT PROSPECTS

QUARTERBACKS

1. **Shedeur Sanders,** Colorado
2. **Quinn Ewers,** Texas
3. **Carson Beck,** Georgia
4. **Cam Ward,** Miami (Fla.)
5. **Jalen Milroe,** Alabama

RUNNING BACKS

1. **Quinshon Judkins,** Ohio State
2. **Ollie Gordon II,** Oklahoma State
3. **TreVeyon Henderson,** Ohio State
4. **Omarion Hampton,** North Carolina
5. **Raheim Sanders,** South Carolina

WIDE RECEIVERS

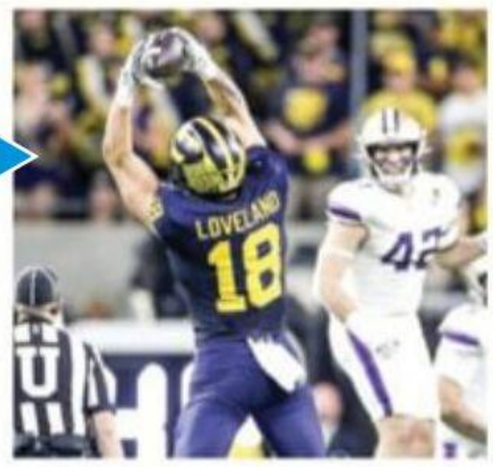
1. **Luther Burden III,** Missouri
2. **Tetairoa McMillan,** Arizona
3. **Emeka Egbuka,** Ohio State
4. **Evan Stewart,** Oregon
5. **Tory Horton,** Colorado State

OFFENSIVE TACKLES

1. **Will Campbell,** LSU
2. **Kelvin Banks Jr.,** Texas
3. **Emery Jones Jr.,** LSU
4. **Josh Conerly Jr.,** Oregon
5. **Blake Miller,** Clemson

TIGHT ENDS

1. **Colston Loveland,** Michigan
2. **Luke Lachey,** Iowa
3. **Bryson Nesbit,** North Carolina
4. **Mitchell Evans,** Notre Dame
5. **Oscar Delp,** Georgia



CO: KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS; OSU- BARBARA J. PERENIC/COLUMBUS DISPATCH; MO- MANDATORY CREDIT: DENNY MEDLEY-USA TODAY SPORTS; MSU- JUNFU HAN; LSU-PETRE THOMAS-USA TODAY SPORTS

EDGE

1. **James Pearce Jr.,** Tennessee
2. **Patrick Payton,** Florida State
3. **Jack Sawyer,** Ohio State
4. **JT Tuimoloau,** Ohio State
5. **Abdul Carter,** Penn State

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN

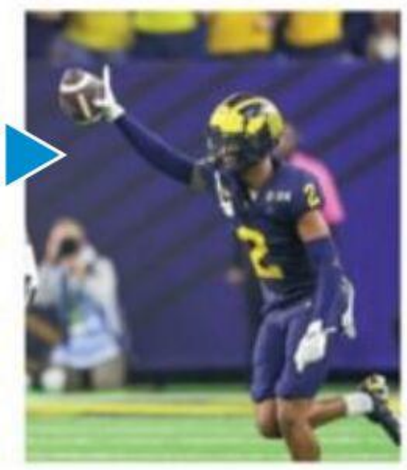
1. **Tyler Booker,** Alabama
2. **Jonah Savaiinaea,** Arizona
3. **Tate Ratledge,** Georgia
4. **Donovan Jackson,** Ohio State
5. **Joshua Gray,** Oregon

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN

1. **Mason Graham,** Michigan
2. **Walter Nolen,** Ole Miss
3. **Tyleik Williams,** Ohio State
4. **Kenneth Grant,** Michigan
5. **Deone Walker,** Kentucky

CORNERBACKS

1. **Will Johnson,** Michigan
2. **Travis Hunter,** Colorado
3. **Benjamin Morrison,** Notre Dame
4. **Denzel Burke,** Ohio State
5. **Jabbar Muhammad,** Oregon



LINEBACKERS

1. **Harold Perkins Jr.,** LSU
2. **Jay Higgins,** Iowa
3. **Barrett Carter,** Clemson
4. **Danny Stutsman,** Oklahoma
5. **Jamon Dumas-Johnson,** Kentucky

SAFETIES

1. **Malaki Starks,** Georgia
2. **Xavier Watts,** Notre Dame
3. **Rod Moore,** Michigan
4. **Malachi Moore,** Alabama
5. **Kevin Winston Jr.,** Penn State

SPECIALISTS

1. **Alex McPherson,** Auburn (K)
2. **Bryce McFerson,** Maryland (P)
3. **Brett Thorson,** Georgia (P)
4. **James Burnip,** Alabama (P)
5. **Graham Nicholson,** Alabama (K)

TN- SAUL YOUNG/NEWS SENTINE;AL; GARY COSBY JR.-USA TODAY SPORTS; MSU-GARY A. VASQUEZ-USA TODAY SPORTS; MSU-THOMAS SHEA-USA TODAY SPORTS; LSU-MATTHEW HINTON-USA TODAY SPORTS; UGA-JOSHUA L. JONES

2025

MOCK DRAFT

BY LUKE EASTERLING

JAMES PEARCE JR.

We all know the NFL never sleeps, and that means that the draft process is always churning. So let's turn the page on the 2024 class to a clean slate that's soon to be filled with new names.

Here's our never-too-early look at how the first round of the 2025 NFL Draft could turn out.

And before you send your angry letters because your team is too high in this draft order for your liking — we're using updated Vegas odds on the winner of Super Bowl LIX (Feb. 9, 2025, at the Caesars Superdome in New Orleans) to determine the order. So blame the experts in Sin City.

1. CAROLINA PANTHERS
JAMES PEARCE JR.
EDGE | TENNESSEE

The Panthers did a solid job of building around Bryce Young on his side of the ball this offseason, but next year, the defense will need reloading.

2. NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS
WILL CAMPBELL OT | LSU

After drafting their new franchise quarterback in Drake Maye, the Pats need to do everything they can to protect him.

3. WASHINGTON COMMANDERS
LUTHER BURDEN III
WR | MISSOURI

If you liked Malik Nabers this year, you should be a huge fan of Burden next year. He'll give quarterback Jayden Daniels a dynamic weapon with elite upside.

4. DENVER BRONCOS
WILL JOHNSON
CB | MICHIGAN

Patrick Surtain II should get a massive new contract, but the Broncos could pair him with another stud corner at the top of next year's draft.

5. TENNESSEE TITANS
KELVIN BANKS JR. | OT | TEXAS

JC Latham is a perfect fit at right tackle, but the Titans still need an upgrade on the other side. Banks would be an ideal blind-side protector for Will Levis.

6. NEW YORK GIANTS
CARSON BECK | QB | TEXAS

Daniel Jones has one more year to prove worthy of his hefty contract before the Giants cut their losses and take another swing on a new franchise passer.

7. ARIZONA CARDINALS
TRAVIS HUNTER
CB/WR | COLORADO

Arizona needs as much pure talent and playmaking ability as they can get, and Hunter could be an electrifying addition on either side of the ball.

8. MINNESOTA VIKINGS
MASON GRAHAM
DL | MICHIGAN

The Vikings need a difference-maker along the interior of their defensive front, and Graham has already proven he can be a game-wrecker.

9. LAS VEGAS RAIDERS
SHEDEUR SANDERS
QB | COLORADO

After missing out on this year's top quarterback prospects, the Raiders swing big on Sanders' massive upside. He would immediately have a better offensive line in Vegas.

10. NEW ORLEANS SAINTS
JACK SAWYER
EDGE | OHIO STATE

A replacement for Cameron Jordan has to be on the horizon for New Orleans, and Sawyer has the solid frame and complete skill set to be the ideal candidate.

11. SEATTLE SEAHAWKS
QUINN EWERS | QB | TEXAS

The Seahawks are high on Sam Howell as a potential Geno Smith successor, but if they get a chance to land one of next year's top passers, they might not be able to help themselves.

12. TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS
TETAIROA MCMILLAN
WR | ARIZONA

Back in 2014, the Bucs drafted a 6-foot-5 stud receiver (Mike Evans) to learn from another one (Vincent Jackson), and they could repeat that process here.

13. INDIANAPOLIS COLTS
BENJAMIN MORRISON
CB | NOTRE DAME

Indy has some youth and promise in the cornerback room, but they could still use another potential shutdown guy like Morrison.

RANDY SARTIN-USA TODAY SPORTS

14. LOS ANGELES CHARGERS
PATRICK PAYTON
EDGE | FLORIDA STATE

Both Joey Bosa and Khalil Mack could be jettisoned for salary cap reasons, leaving the Chargers in need of a high-upside edge rusher or two.

15. PITTSBURGH STEELERS
WALTER NOLEN
DL | OLE MISS

The Steelers rebuilt the trenches on offense in this year's draft, and they should do the same on the other side of the ball in 2025.

16. JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS
DENZEL BURKE
CB | OHIO STATE

Tyson Campbell is one of the league's better young corners, but the Jags could use an upgrade on the other side, and Burke has all the traits to be a first-rounder.

17. CHICAGO BEARS
HOWARD CROSS III
DL | NOTRE DAME

Matt Eberflus' defense needs an explosive, disruptive presence along the interior in the trenches, and the undersized but feisty Cross would fit like a glove.

18. CLEVELAND BROWNS
EMERY JONES | OT | LSU

Finally picking in the first round again, it's time for the Browns to invest in the future of their offensive line with a stud tackle prospect.

19. LOS ANGELES RAMS
CAM WARD
QB | MIAMI (FLA.)

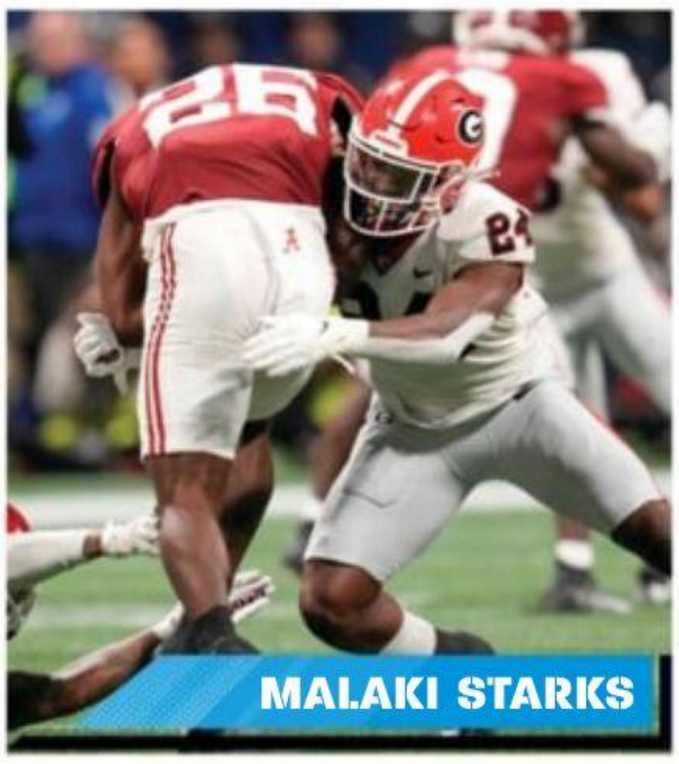
It might be time for the Rams to invest in Matthew Stafford's eventual successor, and Ward has an impressive combination of experience, arm talent and playmaking ability.

20. NEW YORK JETS
COLSTON LOVELAND
TE | MICHIGAN

Regardless of who is throwing passes for the Jets next season, he could use a dynamic mismatch weapon like Loveland at tight end.

21. ATLANTA FALCONS
MALAKI STARKS
S | GEORGIA

Pairing another big-play safety with Jessie Bates III would be a great way for the Falcons to spend their top pick next year. Unless they take another quarterback?


MALAKI STARKS

22. MIAMI DOLPHINS
TYLEIK WILLIAMS
DL | OHIO STATE

Losing Christian Wilkins will be a huge blow to Miami's defensive front, and addressing that should be a top priority in 2025.

23. GREEN BAY PACKERS
TYLER BOOKER
OL | ALABAMA

More beef along the offensive trenches for the Packers, who need to ensure that Jordan Love has everything he needs to reach his lofty ceiling.

24. HOUSTON TEXANS
HAROLD PERKINS JR.
LB | LSU

The Bayou Bengals can't seem to figure out what to do with Perkins, but I'm betting DeMeco Ryans can. His athleticism and playmaking ability would be scary in this defense.

25. DALLAS COWBOYS
EMEKA EGBUKA
WR | OHIO STATE

Even if CeeDee Lamb finally gets his new contract, the Cowboys will need a long-term upgrade at the No. 2 receiver spot, and Egbuka would be an ideal fit.

26. PHILADELPHIA EAGLES
JOSH CONERLY JR.
OT | OREGON

Philly is always investing in the future along the offensive line, and Conerly would be a solid pick who could take over for Lane Johnson.

27. DETROIT LIONS
JT TUIMOLOAU
EDGE | OHIO STATE

Detroit still needs another stud edge rusher to line up across from Aidan Hutchinson, and Tuimoloau's size and complete skill set would make him the perfect match.

28. CINCINNATI BENGALS
LANDON JACKSON
EDGE | ARKANSAS

Jackson is a massive, versatile defensive weapon in the trenches who could allow the Bengals to move on from Trey Hendrickson.

29. BUFFALO BILLS
EVAN STEWART
WR | OREGON

Keon Coleman should make a big impact in Stefon Diggs' absence, but Josh Allen will need another starting-caliber receiver next offseason.

30. BALTIMORE RAVENS
JAY HIGGINS
LB | IOWA

After losing Patrick Queen in free agency, the Ravens replace him with another athletic, hard-hitting defender who fits their style of play.

31. KANSAS CITY CHIEFS
KENNETH GRANT
DL | MICHIGAN

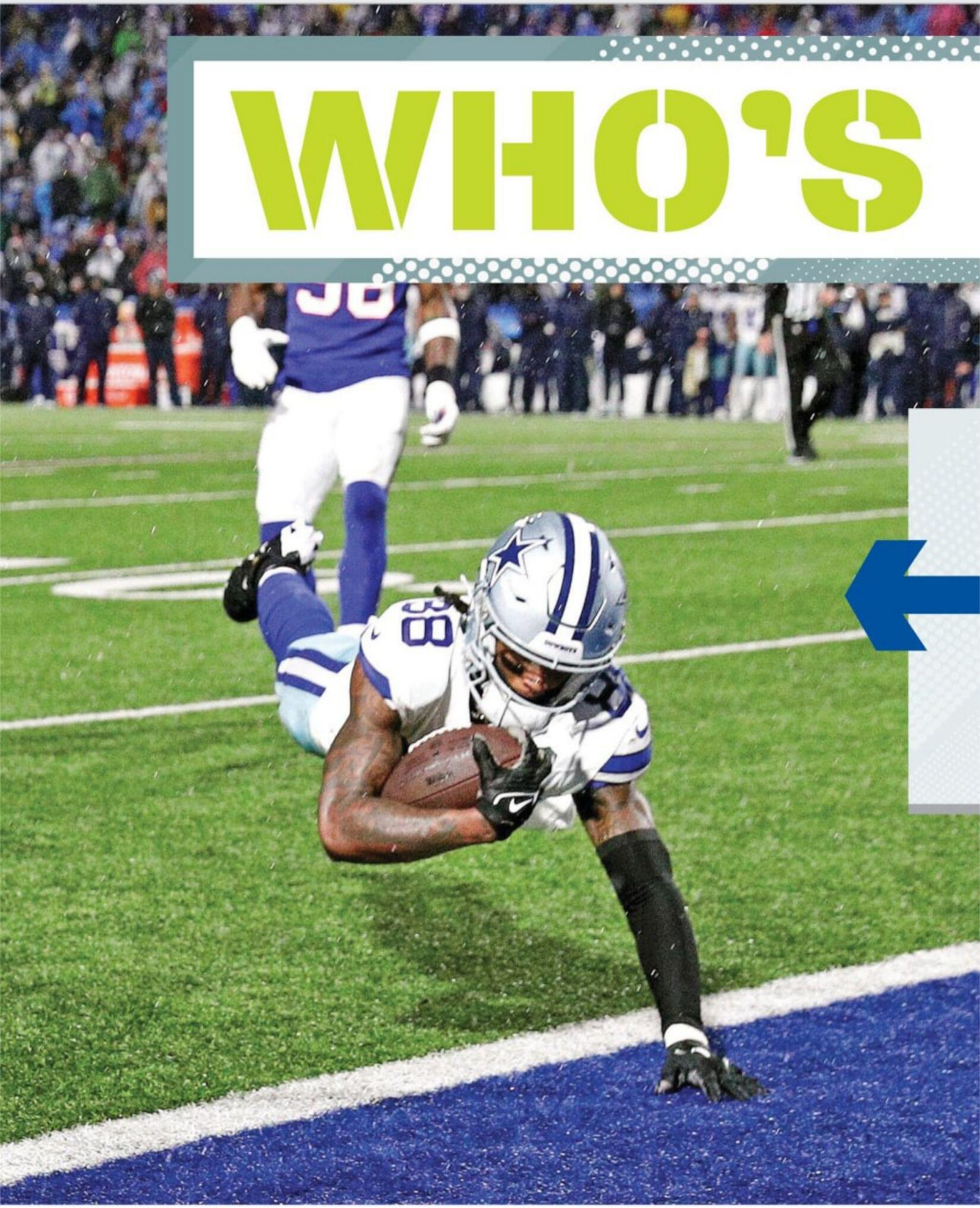
Even after breaking the bank to re-sign Chris Jones, the Chiefs should keep loading up on top talent along the defensive front.

32. SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS
PRINCELY UMANMIELEN
EDGE | OLE MISS

You can never have too many talented pass rushers, and Umanmielen would be able to refine his skill set while learning from one of the best in Nick Bosa.

DALE ZANINE-USA TODAY SPORTS

WHO'S



NO. 1?

2024 FANTASY FOOTBALL

CeeDee LAMB

Yes, I'm aware of the crazy production Christian McCaffrey just delivered. And it's not wrong to take him first. But when you carry the ball that much and avoid injury, there's some luck involved. Since 2014, we've seen 34 RB seasons in which a guy carried at least 270 times and then played the next year. All but two of those follow-up years saw a decrease in carries — most by a significant margin. Is 270 some magic number? Of course not. The takeaway here is that it's a tough position in a tough game, with risk factors beyond injury. Any decline in McCaffrey's career-high yards per carry and total TD rate would ding him as well. Sure, **CeeDee LAMB** could get hurt. But WRs historically carry less risk on that front. And his 2023 stats weren't far off his career lines. Lamb will remain the dominant lead target in a productive offense with a veteran QB and looks like the safest start to your 2024 drafts.

— MATT SCHAUF, ATHLON FANTASY CONTRIBUTOR

JAMIE GERMANO/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

Most fantasy managers will go with Christian McCaffrey as their No. 1 overall pick, but personally, I've been burned by McCaffrey and other running backs when I take them first. The running back position is more prone to injury than the wide receiver position, and I'd rather play on the side of odds. **CeeDee LAMB** is the top wide receiver, coming off his best season yet in 2023. He had 135 receptions for 1,749 yards and 12 receiving touchdowns. He added 113 rushing yards and two rushing touchdowns. It doesn't seem like that kind of production will be slowing down, as he will likely be the center of the Dallas offense (assuming he doesn't hold out and miss time because of contract issues). Lamb had the most receptions out of all wide receivers in 2023 and was just 50 yards short of Tyreek Hill for the most receiving yards at the position. With his two rushing touchdowns, he had the most touchdowns among all wide receivers. I will take that production from my No. 1 pick any day. Add that he — knock on wood — isn't an injury concern at this point, and I feel good about starting him every week.

— SARAH LEWIS, ATHLON FANTASY CONTRIBUTOR

CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY

If I have the No. 1 pick in a fantasy draft, I would take **CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY** with no hesitation whatsoever. There are a few wide receivers who merit consideration for 1.01, but the lack of separation among the top tier only reinforces what makes McCaffrey so unique. Yes, plenty of fantasy GMs still have nightmares about the 2020 season when McCaffrey was the consensus No. 1 pick and he played a grand total of three games. And then he followed that up with another injury-plagued campaign. But he rediscovered his All-Pro form in San Francisco, and there's no doubt that Kyle Shanahan's explosive offense revolves around CMC. Even if he doesn't replicate the rushing yardage, he'll score plenty of touchdowns and see an abundance of targets. If you were to take his receiving production alone last season (67 rec., 564 yds., 7 TDs) he would have finished as a top-40 WR. Besides leading all non-QBs in fantasy scoring last season, McCaffrey was more than 100 points clear of the next RB. The disappearance of workhorse running backs only adds to McCaffrey's appeal. In fact, you can apply another equine label to McCaffrey when it comes to his fantasy status. He's a unicorn.

— MARK ROSS, ATHLON CONSULTING EDITOR

I can understand feeling uneasy about picking **CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY** because it feels like he's eternally on the injury report and he's past typical RB prime age now, entering his age-28 season. But he's played 33 of 34 games the last two seasons, averaged 4.1 fantasy points more than the next closest back who played 16 games last year (Raheem Mostert) and is the only running back in the NFL mixing target volume and high-efficiency rushing. Last year he was a cheat code. The only real argument against McCaffrey is that he could get hurt, and, well, anybody with a heavy volume of touches has a possibility to miss time. Fantasy analysts were trumpeting Jonathan Taylor's remarkable ability to stay healthy a few years ago, and then he missed 16 of his next 34 games. Tyreek Hill missed games last year, and so did Justin Jefferson, my zero RB drafters. McCaffrey's baseline value is so high that it's hard for me to get away from the conclusion that he's the best pick in most fantasy leagues.

— RIVERS McCOWN, ATHLON FANTASY CONTRIBUTOR

As the fantasy pendulum continues to swing in the direction of committee backfields, **CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY** is still fighting the good fight as one of the true three-down featured backs in the league. Yes, he's likely to hit a wall at some point soon due to age and heavy usage, but he'll still be just 28 years old for the entire 2024 season. Even if this ends up being his last elite season as a top fantasy producer, the gap between him and the next-best running back in the fantasy world (especially PPR leagues) is much bigger than the one between whoever your top receiver is and the next guy on that list. Until otherwise noted, CMC is in a class by himself at the top of the fantasy food chain, especially in a creative offense that continues to maximize his unique skill set.

— LUKE EASTERLING, ATHLON SENIOR EDITOR

KYLE TERADA-USA TODAY SPORTS

JA'MARR CHASE

Death, taxes and **JA'MARR CHASE**. There's no such thing as a sure thing in this hobby, but Chase is as close as it gets. He's been in the league for three seasons and made three Pro Bowls, exceeding 1,000 receiving yards each season. He's coming off career highs in targets and receptions, so it's not like the league is anywhere close to figuring him out. Chase could stand to find the end zone a little more often — he's coming off a career-low seven touchdown receptions — but that's a minor quibble in the scheme of things, especially when you consider that his quarterback, Joe Burrow, missed seven games with injury. The Bengals just picked up Chase's fifth-year option, putting him in line for a massive contract in the near future, so he should be motivated to go out and earn some history-making money in 2024. Burrow-to-Chase is looking to me like this generation's Montana-to-Rice.

— ROB DOSTER, ATHLON MANAGING EDITOR

JEREMY REPER-USA TODAY SPORTS

NOBODY?!

The answer, and I say this nearly every year, is **"NOBODY."** Trade it away. The value that you will get in return, even if slight, is worth far more than what you will likely get from keeping it. Look at last year's number 1 pick — Justin Jefferson. He finished outside the top overall 50 players and didn't even finish as a top-25 WR! The year before, Jonathan Taylor was thought to be the No. 1 overall pick, and he managed to play only 11 games, giving his owners a whopping four TDs as a first overall pick. Even if you were outside the majority that year and grabbed Christian McCaffrey, you still would have been better off trading down and grabbing Austin Ekeler, who had a better season than C-Mac. And what about the aforementioned McCaffrey, who was the universal top pick in 2021? He ended up playing just seven games that season! Bottom line: The No. 1 overall pick is almost never the No. 1 player that season and is often nowhere in the vicinity. You are rolling the dice no matter when you pick, even in the first round. Might as well pick up a little value later by trading down and out of the first pick.

— MARK STRAUSBERG, ATHLON FANTASY CONTRIBUTOR

FANTASY POSITION RANKINGS

QUARTERBACKS

Rk	Player	Team
1	Jalen Hurts	PHI
2	Josh Allen	BUF
3	Lamar Jackson	BAL
4	Patrick Mahomes	KC
5	Joe Burrow	CIN
6	Jayden Daniels	WAS
7	Dak Prescott	DAL
8	Trevor Lawrence	JAC
9	Anthony Richardson	IND
10	Jordan Love	GB
11	Kyler Murray	ARI
12	C.J. Stroud	HOU
13	Geno Smith	SEA
14	Brock Purdy	SF
15	Aaron Rodgers	NYJ
16	Tua Tagovailoa	MIA
17	Jared Goff	DET
18	Matthew Stafford	LAR
19	Baker Mayfield	TB
20	Justin Herbert	LAC
21	Deshaun Watson	CLE
22	Caleb Williams	CHI
23	Drake Maye	NE
24	Aidan O'Connell	LV
25	Will Levis	TEN
26	Bryce Young	CAR
27	Bo Nix	DEN
28	Derek Carr	NO
29	J.J. McCarthy	MIN
30	Daniel Jones	NYG
31	Kirk Cousins	ATL
32	Russell Wilson	PIT
33	Taysom Hill	NO
34	Justin Fields	PIT
35	Sam Darnold	MIN
36	Marcus Mariota	WAS
37	Jacoby Brissett	NE
38	Drew Lock	NYG
39	Michael Penix Jr.	ATL
40	Jameis Winston	CLE
41	Tyrod Taylor	NYJ
42	Kenny Pickett	PHI
43	Jimmy Garoppolo	LAR
44	Jarrett Stidham	DEN
45	Mike White	MIA
46	Joe Flacco	IND
47	Gardner Minshew	LV
48	Tyson Bagent	CHI
49	Josh Johnson	BAL
50	Sam Howell	SEA

JALEN HURTS

CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY

RUNNING BACKS

Rk	Player	Team
1	Christian McCaffrey	SF
2	Breece Hall	NYJ
3	Bijan Robinson	ATL
4	Jonathan Taylor	IND
5	Derrick Henry	BAL
6	Saquon Barkley	PHI
7	Travis Etienne Jr.	JAC
8	Kyren Williams	LAR
9	Isiah Pacheco	KC
10	Kenneth Walker III	SEA
11	De'Von Achane	MIA
12	Joe Mixon	HOU
13	Jahmyr Gibbs	DET
14	James Cook	BUF
15	Josh Jacobs	GB
16	Zamir White	LV
17	Aaron Jones	MIN
18	Javonte Williams	DEN
19	Rhamondre Stevenson	NE
20	David Montgomery	DET
21	Raheem Mostert	MIA
22	D'Andre Swift	CHI
23	Rachaad White	TB
24	Jaylen Warren	PIT
25	Zack Moss	CIN
26	Devin Singletary	NYG
27	James Conner	ARI
28	Tony Pollard	TEN
29	Alvin Kamara	NO
30	Najee Harris	PIT
31	Jonathon Brooks	CAR
32	Gus Edwards	LAC
33	Austin Ekeler	WAS
34	Brian Robinson Jr.	WAS
35	Ezekiel Elliott	DAL
36	Nick Chubb	CLE
37	Jerome Ford	CLE
38	Chase Brown	CIN
39	Tyjae Spears	TEN
40	Antonio Gibson	NE
41	Kimani Vidal	LAC
42	Jaleel McLaughlin	DEN
43	Blake Corum	LAR
44	Tyler Allgeier	ATL
45	Zach Charbonnet	SEA
46	Ray Davis	BUF
47	Trey Benson	ARI
48	Ty Chandler	MIN
49	Kendre Miller	NO
50	Chuba Hubbard	CAR
51	J.K. Dobbins	LAC
52	Bucky Irving	TB
53	Rico Dowdle	DAL
54	Evan Hull	IND
55	Deuce Vaughn	DAL
56	Will Shipley	PHI
57	MarShawn Lloyd	GB
58	Jaylen Wright	MIA
59	Tyrone Tracy Jr.	NYG
60	Kenneth Gainwell	PHI
61	Tank Bigsby	JAC
62	Khalil Herbert	CHI
63	Alexander Mattison	LV
64	D'Onta Foreman	CLE
65	Dameon Pierce	HOU
66	Audric Estime	DEN
67	Miles Sanders	CAR
68	Roschon Johnson	CHI
69	Clyde Edwards-Helaire	KC
70	Dylan Laube	LV
71	Justice Hill	BAL
72	Elijah Mitchell	SF
73	AJ Dillon	GB
74	Keaton Mitchell	BAL
75	Braelon Allen	NYJ
76	Eric Gray	NYG
77	Chris Rodriguez Jr.	WAS
78	Trey Sermon	IND
79	Royce Freeman	DAL
80	Jamaal Williams	NO

HURTS: NATHAN RAY SEEBECK-USA TODAY SPORTS; MCCAFFREY: STEPHEN R. SYLVANIE-USA TODAY SPORTS

WIDE RECEIVERS

Rk	Player	Team
1	CeeDee Lamb	DAL
2	Tyreek Hill	MIA
3	Ja'Marr Chase	CIN
4	Justin Jefferson	MIN
5	Amon-Ra St. Brown	DET
6	Garrett Wilson	NYJ
7	Puka Nacua	LAR
8	A.J. Brown	PHI
9	Cooper Kupp	LAR
10	Deebo Samuel	SF
11	Davante Adams	LV
12	Jaylen Waddle	MIA
13	Christian Kirk	JAC
14	Tee Higgins	CIN
15	Rashee Rice	KC
16	Mike Evans	TB
17	Brandon Aiyuk	SF
18	Drake London	ATL
19	DK Metcalf	SEA
20	Michael Pittman Jr.	IND
21	Chris Olave	NO
22	Terry McLaurin	WAS
23	Marvin Harrison Jr.	ARI
24	Jayden Reed	GB
25	Amari Cooper	CLE
26	DJ Moore	CHI
27	Chris Godwin	TB
28	Malik Nabers	NYG
29	DeVonta Smith	PHI
30	George Pickens	PIT
31	Nico Collins	HOU
32	Stefon Diggs	HOU
33	Tyler Lockett	SEA
34	Diontae Johnson	CAR
35	DeAndre Hopkins	TEN
36	Zay Flowers	BAL
37	Courtland Sutton	DEN
38	Calvin Ridley	TEN
39	Jordan Addison	MIN
40	Tank Dell	HOU
41	Keon Coleman	BUF
42	Mike Williams	NYJ
43	Marquise Brown	KC
44	Curtis Samuel	BUF
45	Jakobi Meyers	LV
46	Christian Watson	GB
47	Brandin Cooks	DAL
48	Gabe Davis	JAC
49	Jerry Jeudy	CLE
50	Rashid Shaheed	NO
51	Jaxon Smith-Njigba	SEA
52	Keenan Allen	CHI
53	DeMario Douglas	NE
54	Adam Thielen	CAR
55	Ladd McConkey	LAC
56	Marvin Mims Jr.	DEN

Rk	Player	Team
57	Wan'Dale Robinson	NYG
58	Michael Wilson	ARI
59	Rome Odunze	CHI
60	Romeo Doubs	GB
61	Roman Wilson	PIT
62	Josh Downs	IND
63	Joshua Palmer	LAC
64	Kendrick Bourne	NE
65	Jahan Dotson	WAS
66	Brian Thomas Jr.	JAC
67	Xavier Worthy	KC
68	Darnell Mooney	ATL
69	Rashod Bateman	BAL
70	Demarcus Robinson	LAR
71	Dontayvion Wicks	GB
72	Darius Slayton	NYG
73	Jameson Williams	DET
74	Quentin Johnston	LAC
75	Khalil Shakir	BUF
76	Greg Dortch	ARI
77	Troy Franklin	DEN
78	Jonathan Mingo	CAR
79	Tyler Boyd	TEN
80	Josh Reynolds	DEN
81	Ja'Lynn Polk	NE
82	Jalen Tolbert	DAL
83	Jalin Hyatt	NYG
84	Elijah Moore	CLE
85	Van Jefferson	PIT
86	Jermaine Burton	CIN
87	Cedrick Wilson Jr.	NO
88	Alec Pierce	IND
89	Trey Palmer	TB
90	Nelson Agholor	BAL
91	Treylon Burks	TEN
92	Malachi Corley	NYJ
93	Allen Lazard	NYJ
94	Luke McCaffrey	WAS
95	A.T. Perry	NO
96	JuJu Smith-Schuster	NE
97	K.J. Osborn	NE
98	Xavier Legette	CAR
99	Ricky Pearsall	SF
100	Javon Baker	NE

KAREEM ELGAZZAR-USA TODAY SPORTS

TIGHT ENDS

Rk	Player	Team
1	Travis Kelce	KC
2	Mark Andrews	BAL
3	Sam LaPorta	DET
4	Dalton Kincaid	BUF
5	Evan Engram	JAC
6	Trey McBride	ARI
7	Kyle Pitts	ATL
8	Jake Ferguson	DAL
9	David Njoku	CLE
10	Dallas Goedert	PHI
11	George Kittle	SF
12	Brock Bowers	LV
13	Noah Fant	SEA
14	Pat Freiermuth	PIT
15	Darren Waller	NYG
16	Tyler Conklin	NYJ
17	T.J. Hockenson	MIN
18	Dalton Schultz	HOU
19	Chigoziem Okonkwo	TEN
20	Luke Musgrave	GB
21	Hunter Henry	NE
22	Juwan Johnson	NO
23	Cole Kmet	CHI
24	Greg Dulcich	DEN
25	Colby Parkinson	LAR
26	Cade Otton	TB
27	Mike Gesicki	CIN
28	Jelani Woods	IND
29	Michael Mayer	LV
30	Ben Sinnott	WAS
31	Zach Ertz	WAS
32	Jonnu Smith	MIA
33	Hayden Hurst	LAC
34	Will Dissly	LAC
35	Ja'Tavion Sanders	CAR
36	Dawson Knox	BUF
37	Isaiah Likely	BAL
38	Gerald Everett	CHI
39	Erick All	CIN
40	Tucker Kraft	GB

KICKERS

Rk	Player	Team
1	Brandon Aubrey	DAL
2	Justin Tucker	BAL
3	Joshua Karty	LAR
4	Cam Little	JAC
5	Matt Gay	IND
6	Greg Zuerlein	NYJ
7	Dustin Hopkins	CLE
8	Blake Grupe	NO
9	Harrison Butker	KC
10	Evan McPherson	CIN
11	Tyler Bass	BUF
12	Ka'imi Fairbairn	HOU
13	Jake Elliott	PHI
14	Chris Boswell	PIT
15	Daniel Carlson	LV
16	Jason Sanders	MIA
17	Chase McLaughlin	TB
18	Michael Badgley	DET
19	Brandon McManus	WAS
20	Younghoe Koo	ATL
21	Cameron Dicker	LAC
22	Nick Folk	TEN
23	Cairo Santos	CHI
24	Matt Prater	ARI
25	Jason Myers	SEA
26	Eddy Pineiro	CAR
27	Graham Gano	NYG
28	Will Reichard	MIN

DEFENSE/ST

Rk	Player
1	Dallas
2	Indianapolis
3	Philadelphia
4	N.Y. Jets
5	New England
6	Cleveland
7	San Francisco
8	Baltimore
9	Kansas City
10	Houston
11	Jacksonville
12	Chicago
13	Detroit
14	Denver
15	Seattle
16	New Orleans
17	Pittsburgh
18	Green Bay
19	L.A. Chargers
20	Arizona
21	Tampa Bay
22	Miami
23	N.Y. Giants
24	Cincinnati
25	Washington
26	Minnesota
27	Las Vegas
28	Tennessee
29	Buffalo
30	Atlanta
31	Carolina
32	L.A. Rams

TOP 280 FANTASY BIG BOARD

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CEEDEE LAMB

TYREEK HILL

	Rk	Player	Pos	Team
☐	1	CeeDee Lamb	WR	DAL
☐	2	Christian McCaffrey	RB	SF
☐	3	Tyreek Hill	WR	MIA
☐	4	Ja'Marr Chase	WR	CIN
☐	5	Justin Jefferson	WR	MIN
☐	6	Amon-Ra St. Brown	WR	DET
☐	7	Breece Hall	RB	NYJ
☐	8	Garrett Wilson	WR	NYJ
☐	9	Puka Nacua	WR	LAR
☐	10	A.J. Brown	WR	PHI
☐	11	Bijan Robinson	RB	ATL
☐	12	Jonathan Taylor	RB	IND
☐	13	Travis Kelce	TE	KC
☐	14	Derrick Henry	RB	BAL
☐	15	Saquon Barkley	RB	PHI
☐	16	Cooper Kupp	WR	LAR
☐	17	Travis Etienne Jr.	RB	JAC
☐	18	Kyren Williams	RB	LAR
☐	19	Deebo Samuel	WR	SF
☐	20	Davante Adams	WR	LV
☐	21	Jaylen Waddle	WR	MIA
☐	22	Mark Andrews	TE	BAL
☐	23	Sam LaPorta	TE	DET
☐	24	Jalen Hurts	QB	PHI
☐	25	Josh Allen	QB	BUF
☐	26	Christian Kirk	WR	JAC
☐	27	Tee Higgins	WR	CIN
☐	28	Rashee Rice	WR	KC
☐	29	Mike Evans	WR	TB
☐	30	Isiah Pacheco	WR	KC
☐	31	Kenneth Walker III	RB	SEA
☐	32	De'Von Achane	RB	MIA
☐	33	Joe Mixon	RB	HOU
☐	34	Brandon Aiyuk	WR	SF
☐	35	Drake London	WR	ATL
☐	36	DK Metcalf	WR	SEA
☐	37	Michael Pittman Jr.	WR	IND
☐	38	Chris Olave	WR	NO
☐	39	Jahmyr Gibbs	RB	DET
☐	40	James Cook	RB	BUF
☐	41	Josh Jacobs	RB	GB
☐	42	Lamar Jackson	QB	BAL
☐	43	Terry McLaurin	WR	WAS
☐	44	Marvin Harrison Jr.	WR	ARI
☐	45	Jayden Reed	WR	GB
☐	46	Amari Cooper	WR	CLE
☐	47	DJ Moore	WR	CHI
☐	48	Chris Godwin	WR	TB
☐	49	Malik Nabers	WR	NYG
☐	50	DeVonta Smith	WR	PHI
☐	51	George Pickens	WR	PIT
☐	52	Nico Collins	WR	HOU
☐	53	Stefon Diggs	WR	HOU
☐	54	Patrick Mahomes	QB	KC
☐	55	Joe Burrow	QB	CIN
☐	56	Dalton Kincaid	TE	BUF
☐	57	Evan Engram	TE	JAC
☐	58	Trey McBride	TE	ARI
☐	59	Kyle Pitts	TE	ATL
☐	60	Zamir White	RB	LV
☐	61	Aaron Jones	RB	MIN
☐	62	Javonte Williams	RB	DEN
☐	63	Rhamondre Stevenson	RB	NE
☐	64	Tyler Lockett	WR	SEA
☐	65	Diontae Johnson	WR	CAR
☐	66	DeAndre Hopkins	WR	TEN
☐	67	Zay Flowers	WR	BAL
☐	68	Jake Ferguson	TE	DAL
☐	69	David Montgomery	RB	DET
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☐	71	D'Andre Swift	RB	CHI
☐	72	Jayden Daniels	QB	WAS
☐	73	Dak Prescott	QB	DAL
☐	74	Courtland Sutton	WR	DEN
☐	75	Calvin Ridley	WR	TEN
☐	76	Jordan Addison	WR	MIN
☐	77	Tank Dell	WR	HOU
☐	78	Trevor Lawrence	QB	JAC
☐	79	Anthony Richardson	QB	IND
☐	80	Rachaad White	RB	TB
☐	81	Jaylen Warren	RB	PIT
☐	82	Zack Moss	RB	CIN
☐	83	Devin Singletary	RB	NYG
☐	84	James Conner	RB	ARI
☐	85	Tony Pollard	RB	TEN
☐	86	Alvin Kamara	RB	NO
☐	87	David Njoku	TE	CLE
☐	88	Dallas Goedert	TE	PHI
☐	89	George Kittle	TE	SF
☐	90	Brock Bowers	TE	LV
☐	91	Najee Harris	RB	PIT
☐	92	Jonathon Brooks	RB	CAR
☐	93	Jordan Love	QB	GB
☐	94	Kyler Murray	QB	ARI
☐	95	C.J. Stroud	QB	HOU
☐	96	Keon Coleman	WR	BUF
☐	97	Mike Williams	WR	NYJ
☐	98	Marquise Brown	WR	KC
☐	99	Curtis Samuel	WR	BUF
☐	100	Jakobi Meyers	WR	LV
☐	101	Christian Watson	WR	GB
☐	102	Gus Edwards	RB	LAC
☐	103	Austin Ekeler	RB	WAS
☐	104	Brian Robinson Jr.	RB	WAS
☐	105	Brandin Cooks	WR	DAL
☐	106	Gabe Davis	WR	JAC
☐	107	Jerry Jeudy	WR	CLE
☐	108	Rashid Shaheed	WR	NO
☐	109	Jaxon Smith-Njigba	WR	SEA
☐	110	Keenan Allen	WR	CHI
☐	111	Noah Fant	TE	SEA
☐	112	Pat Freiermuth	TE	PIT

LAMB: ERIC HARTLINE-USA TODAY SPORTS; HILL: JASEN VINLOVE-USA TODAY SPORTS

Rk	Player	Pos	Team
☐ 113	Geno Smith	QB	SEA
☐ 114	Brock Purdy	QB	SF
☐ 115	Ezekiel Elliott	RB	DAL
☐ 116	Nick Chubb	RB	CLE
☐ 117	Jerome Ford	RB	CLE
☐ 118	Chase Brown	RB	CIN
☐ 119	Tyjae Spears	RB	TEN
☐ 120	Antonio Gibson	RB	NE
☐ 121	Kimani Vidal	RB	LAC
☐ 122	Jaleel McLaughlin	RB	DEN
☐ 123	Blake Corum	RB	LAR
☐ 124	Tyler Allgeier	RB	ATL
☐ 125	DeMario Douglas	WR	NE
☐ 126	Adam Thielen	WR	CAR
☐ 127	Ladd McConkey	WR	LAC
☐ 128	Marvin Mims Jr.	WR	DEN
☐ 129	Wan'Dale Robinson	WR	NYG
☐ 130	Michael Wilson	WR	ARI
☐ 131	Rome Odunze	WR	CHI
☐ 132	Romeo Doubs	WR	GB
☐ 133	Zach Charbonnet	RB	SEA
☐ 134	Ray Davis	RB	BUF
☐ 135	Trey Benson	RB	ARI
☐ 136	Ty Chandler	RB	MIN
☐ 137	Kendre Miller	RB	NO
☐ 138	Roman Wilson	WR	PIT
☐ 139	Josh Downs	WR	IND
☐ 140	Joshua Palmer	WR	LAC
☐ 141	Kendrick Bourne	WR	NE
☐ 142	Jahan Dotson	WR	WAS
☐ 143	Brian Thomas Jr.	WR	JAC
☐ 144	Xavier Worthy	WR	KC
☐ 145	Darnell Mooney	WR	ATL
☐ 146	Rashod Bateman	WR	BAL
☐ 147	Darren Waller	TE	NYG
☐ 148	Tyler Conklin	TE	NYJ
☐ 149	T.J. Hockenson	TE	MIN
☐ 150	Dalton Schultz	TE	HOU
☐ 151	Aaron Rodgers	QB	NYJ
☐ 152	Tua Tagovailoa	QB	MIA
☐ 153	Jared Goff	QB	DET
☐ 154	Matthew Stafford	QB	LAR
☐ 155	Baker Mayfield	QB	TB
☐ 156	Justin Herbert	QB	LAC
☐ 157	Dallas	DST	
☐ 158	Chuba Hubbard	RB	CAR
☐ 159	J.K. Dobbins	RB	LAC
☐ 160	Bucky Irving	RB	TB
☐ 161	Rico Dowdle	RB	DAL
☐ 162	Evan Hull	RB	IND
☐ 163	Chigoziem Okonkwo	TE	TEN
☐ 164	Luke Musgrave	TE	GB
☐ 165	Demarcus Robinson	WR	LAR
☐ 166	Dontayvion Wicks	WR	GB
☐ 167	Darius Slayton	WR	NYG
☐ 168	Jameson Williams	WR	DET
☐ 169	Quentin Johnston	WR	LAC
☐ 170	Khalil Shakir	WR	BUF
☐ 171	Deuce Vaughn	RB	DAL
☐ 172	Will Shipley	RB	PHI
☐ 173	MarShawn Lloyd	RB	GB
☐ 174	Jaylen Wright	RB	MIA
☐ 175	Deshaun Watson	QB	CLE
☐ 176	Drake Maye	QB	NE
☐ 177	Caleb Williams	QB	CHI
☐ 178	Indianapolis	DST	IND
☐ 179	Philadelphia	DST	PHI
☐ 180	New York Jets	DST	NYJ
☐ 181	New England	DST	NE
☐ 182	Cleveland	DST	CLE
☐ 183	San Francisco	DST	SF
☐ 184	Baltimore	DST	BAL
☐ 185	Kansas City	DST	KC
☐ 186	Tyrone Tracy Jr.	RB	NYG
☐ 187	Kenneth Gainwell	RB	PHI
☐ 188	Tank Bigsby	RB	JAC
☐ 189	Khalil Herbert	RB	CHI
☐ 190	Alexander Mattison	RB	LV
☐ 191	D'Onta Foreman	RB	CLE
☐ 192	Dameon Pierce	RB	HOU
☐ 193	Audric Estime	RB	DEN
☐ 194	Greg Dortch	WR	ARI
☐ 195	Troy Franklin	WR	DEN
☐ 196	Jonathan Mingo	WR	CAR
☐ 197	Tyler Boyd	WR	TEN
☐ 198	Josh Reynolds	WR	DEN
☐ 199	Ja'Lynn Polk	WR	NE
☐ 200	Jalen Tolbert	WR	DAL
☐ 201	Jalin Hyatt	WR	NYG
☐ 202	Elijah Moore	WR	CLE
☐ 203	Van Jefferson	WR	PIT
☐ 204	Jermaine Burton	WR	CIN
☐ 205	Miles Sanders	RB	CAR
☐ 206	Roschon Johnson	RB	CHI
☐ 207	Clyde Edwards-Helaire	RB	KC
☐ 208	Dylan Laube	RB	LV
☐ 209	Justice Hill	RB	BAL
☐ 210	Elijah Mitchell	RB	SF
☐ 211	Hunter Henry	TE	NE
☐ 212	Juwan Johnson	TE	NO
☐ 213	Cole Kmet	TE	CHI
☐ 214	Greg Dulcich	TE	DEN
☐ 215	Aidan O'Connell	QB	LV
☐ 216	Will Levis	QB	TEN
☐ 217	Bryce Young	QB	CAR
☐ 218	Bo Nix	QB	DEN
☐ 219	Derek Carr	QB	NO
☐ 220	Colby Parkinson	TE	LAR
☐ 221	Cade Otton	TE	TB
☐ 222	Mike Gesicki	TE	CIN
☐ 223	AJ Dillon	RB	GB
☐ 224	Keaton Mitchell	RB	BAL
☐ 225	Braelon Allen	RB	NYJ
☐ 226	Eric Gray	RB	NYG
☐ 227	Chris Rodriguez Jr.	RB	WAS
☐ 228	Cedrick Wilson Jr.	WR	NO
☐ 229	Alec Pierce	WR	IND
☐ 230	Trey Palmer	WR	TB
☐ 231	Nelson Agholor	WR	BAL
☐ 232	Treylon Burks	WR	TEN
☐ 233	Malachi Corley	WR	NYJ
☐ 234	Allen Lazard	WR	NYJ
☐ 235	Trey Sermon	RB	IND
☐ 236	Royce Freeman	RB	DAL
☐ 237	Jamaal Williams	RB	NO
☐ 238	Isaiah Davis	RB	NYJ
☐ 239	D'Ernest Johnson	RB	JAC
☐ 240	Cordarrelle Patterson	RB	PIT
☐ 241	Luke McCaffrey	WR	WAS
☐ 242	A.T. Perry	WR	NO
☐ 243	JuJu Smith-Schuster	WR	NE
☐ 244	K.J. Osborn	WR	NE
☐ 245	Xavier Legette	WR	CAR
☐ 246	Ricky Pearsall	WR	SF
☐ 247	Javon Baker	WR	NE
☐ 248	Jelani Woods	TE	IND
☐ 249	Michael Mayer	TE	LV
☐ 250	Ben Sinnott	TE	WAS
☐ 251	Zach Ertz	TE	WAS
☐ 252	Michael Carter	RB	ARI
☐ 253	Jeff Wilson Jr.	RB	MIA
☐ 254	Israel Abanikanda	RB	NYJ
☐ 255	Isaac Guerendo	RB	SF
☐ 256	Jordan Mason	RB	SF
☐ 257	Rasheen Ali	RB	BAL
☐ 258	J.J. McCarthy	QB	MIN
☐ 259	Daniel Jones	QB	NYG
☐ 260	Kirk Cousins	QB	ATL
☐ 261	Houston	DST	HOU
☐ 262	Jacksonville	DST	JAC
☐ 263	Chicago	DST	CHI
☐ 264	Jonnu Smith	TE	MIA
☐ 265	Hayden Hurst	TE	LAC
☐ 266	Will Dissly	TE	LAC
☐ 267	Ja'Tavion Sanders	TE	CAR
☐ 268	Dawson Knox	TE	BUF
☐ 269	Brandon Aubrey	K	DAL
☐ 270	Justin Tucker	K	BAL
☐ 271	Joshua Karty	K	LAR
☐ 272	Cam Little	K	JAC
☐ 273	Matt Gay	K	IND
☐ 274	Greg Zuerlein	K	NYJ
☐ 275	Dustin Hopkins	K	CLE
☐ 276	Blake Grupe	K	NO
☐ 277	Harrison Butker	K	KC
☐ 278	Evan McPherson	K	CIN
☐ 279	Tyler Bass	K	BUF
☐ 280	Ka'imi Fairbairn	K	HOU

TOP 240

FANTASY WITH IDPs

For more fantasy, visit
ATHLONSPORTS.COM

T.J. WATT

Rk	Player	Pos	Team
1	CeeDee Lamb	WR	DAL
2	Christian McCaffrey	RB	SF
3	Tyreek Hill	WR	MIA
4	Ja'Marr Chase	WR	CIN
5	Justin Jefferson	WR	MIN
6	Amon-Ra St. Brown	WR	DET
7	Breece Hall	RB	NYJ
8	Garrett Wilson	WR	NYJ
9	Puka Nacua	WR	LAR
10	A.J. Brown	WR	PHI
11	Bijan Robinson	RB	ATL
12	Jonathan Taylor	RB	IND
13	Travis Kelce	TE	KC
14	Derrick Henry	RB	BAL
15	Saquon Barkley	RB	PHI
16	Cooper Kupp	WR	LAR
17	Travis Etienne Jr.	RB	JAC
18	Kyren Williams	RB	LAR
19	Deebo Samuel	WR	SF
20	Davante Adams	WR	LV
21	Jaylen Waddle	WR	MIA
22	Mark Andrews	TE	BAL
23	Sam LaPorta	TE	DET
24	Jalen Hurts	QB	PHI
25	Josh Allen	QB	BUF
26	Christian Kirk	WR	JAC
27	Tee Higgins	WR	CIN
28	Rashee Rice	WR	KC
29	Mike Evans	WR	TB
30	Isiah Pacheco	RB	KC
31	Kenneth Walker III	RB	SEA
32	De'Von Achane	RB	MIA
33	Joe Mixon	RB	HOU
34	Brandon Aiyuk	WR	SF
35	Drake London	WR	ATL
36	DK Metcalf	WR	SEA
37	Michael Pittman Jr.	WR	IND
38	Chris Olave	WR	NO
39	Jahmyr Gibbs	RB	DET
40	James Cook	RB	BUF
41	Josh Jacobs	RB	GB
42	Lamar Jackson	QB	BAL
43	Terry McLaurin	WR	WAS
44	Marvin Harrison Jr.	WR	ARI
45	Jayden Reed	WR	GB
46	Amari Cooper	WR	CLE
47	DJ Moore	WR	CHI
48	Chris Godwin	WR	TB
49	Malik Nabers	WR	NYG
50	DeVonta Smith	WR	PHI
51	George Pickens	WR	PIT
52	Nico Collins	WR	HOU
53	Stefon Diggs	WR	HOU
54	Patrick Mahomes	QB	KC
55	Joe Burrow	QB	CIN
56	Dalton Kincaid	TE	BUF
57	Evan Engram	TE	JAC
58	Trey McBride	TE	ARI
59	Kyle Pitts	TE	ATL
60	Zamir White	RB	LV
61	Aaron Jones	RB	MIN
62	Javonte Williams	RB	DEN
63	Rhamondre Stevenson	RB	NE
64	Tyler Lockett	WR	SEA
65	Diontae Johnson	WR	CAR
66	DeAndre Hopkins	WR	TEN
67	Zay Flowers	WR	BAL
68	Jake Ferguson	TE	DAL
69	David Montgomery	RB	DET
70	Raheem Mostert	RB	MIA
71	D'Andre Swift	RB	CHI
72	Jayden Daniels	QB	WAS
73	Dak Prescott	QB	DAL
74	T.J. Watt	DE	PIT
75	Foyesade Oluokun	LB	JAC
76	Zaire Franklin	LB	IND
77	Roquan Smith	LB	BAL
78	Courtland Sutton	WR	DEN
79	Calvin Ridley	WR	TEN
80	Jordan Addison	WR	MIN
81	Tank Dell	WR	HOU
82	Trevor Lawrence	QB	JAC
83	Anthony Richardson	QB	IND
84	Rachaad White	RB	TB
85	Nick Bolton	LB	KC
86	Alex Singleton	LB	DEN
87	T.J. Edwards	LB	CHI
88	Danielle Hunter	DE	HOU
89	Maxx Crosby	DE	LV
90	Josh Allen	DE	JAC
91	Jaylen Warren	RB	PIT
92	Zack Moss	RB	CIN
93	Devin Singletary	RB	NYG
94	James Conner	RB	ARI
95	Tony Pollard	RB	TEN
96	Antoine Winfield Jr.	S	TB

TOP 65 IDPs

RK	PLAYER	POS	TEAM
1	T.J. Watt	DE	PIT
2	Foyesade Oluokun	LB	JAC
3	Zaire Franklin	LB	IND
4	Roquan Smith	LB	BAL
5	Nick Bolton	LB	KC
6	Alex Singleton	LB	DEN
7	T.J. Edwards	LB	CHI
8	Danielle Hunter	DE	HOU
9	Maxx Crosby	DE	LV
10	Josh Allen	DE	JAC
11	Antoine Winfield Jr.	S	TB
12	Derwin James Jr.	S	LAC
13	Fred Warner	LB	SF
14	Jordyn Brooks	LB	MIA
15	Bobby Wagner	LB	WAS
16	Bobby Okereke	LB	NYG
17	Terrel Bernard	LB	BUF
18	Nick Bosa	DE	SF
19	Myles Garrett	DE	CLE
20	Micah Parsons	DE	DAL
21	Camryn Bynum	S	MIN
22	Minkah Fitzpatrick	S	PIT
23	Kyle Hamilton	S	BAL
24	Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah	LB	CLE
25	Lavonte David	LB	TB
26	Quay Walker	LB	GB
27	Logan Wilson	LB	CIN
28	Matthew Judon	DE	NE
29	DeForest Buckner	DT	IND
30	Aidan Hutchinson	DE	DET
31	Jack Campbell	LB	DET
32	Ernest Jones	LB	LAR
33	Patrick Queen	LB	PIT
34	Robert Spillane	LB	LV

TOMMY GILLIGAN-USA TODAY SPORTS

Rk	Player	Pos	Team
97	Derwin James Jr.	S	LAC
98	Alvin Kamara	RB	NO
99	David Njoku	TE	CLE
100	Dallas Goedert	TE	PHI
101	George Kittle	TE	SF
102	Brock Bowers	TE	LV
103	Najee Harris	RB	PIT
104	Jonathon Brooks	RB	CAR
105	Jordan Love	QB	GB
106	Kyler Murray	QB	ARI
107	C.J. Stroud	QB	HOU
108	Fred Warner	LB	SF
109	Jordyn Brooks	LB	MIA
110	Bobby Wagner	LB	WAS
111	Bobby Okereke	LB	NYG
112	Terrel Bernard	LB	BUF
113	Nick Bosa	DE	SF
114	Myles Garrett	DE	CLE
115	Micah Parsons	DE	DAL
116	Keon Coleman	WR	BUF
117	Mike Williams	WR	NYJ
118	Marquise Brown	WR	KC
119	Curtis Samuel	WR	BUF
120	Jakobi Meyers	WR	LV
121	Christian Watson	WR	GB
122	Camryn Bynum	S	MIN
123	Minkah Fitzpatrick	S	PIT
124	Kyle Hamilton	S	BAL
125	Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah	LB	CLE
126	Lavonte David	LB	TB
127	Quay Walker	LB	GB
128	Logan Wilson	LB	CIN
129	Gus Edwards	RB	LAC
130	Austin Ekeler	RB	WAS
131	Brian Robinson Jr.	RB	WAS
132	Matthew Judon	DE	NE
133	DeForest Buckner	DT	IND
134	Aidan Hutchinson	DE	DET
135	Brandin Cooks	WR	DAL
136	Gabe Davis	WR	JAC
137	Jerry Jeudy	WR	CLE
138	Rashid Shaheed	WR	NO
139	Jaxon Smith-Njigba	WR	SEA
140	Keenan Allen	WR	CHI
141	Noah Fant	TE	SEA
142	Pat Freiermuth	TE	PIT
143	Jack Campbell	LB	DET
144	Ernest Jones IV	LB	LAR
145	Patrick Queen	LB	PIT
146	Robert Spillane	LB	LV
147	Frankie Luvu	LB	WAS
148	Quincy Williams	LB	NYJ
149	Azeez Al-Shaair	LB	HOU
150	Geno Smith	QB	SEA
151	Brock Purdy	QB	SF
152	Ezekiel Elliott	RB	DAL
153	Nick Chubb	RB	CLE
154	Jerome Ford	RB	CLE
155	Chase Brown	RB	CIN
156	Tyjae Spears	RB	TEN
157	Will Anderson Jr.	DE	HOU
158	Khalil Mack	DE	LAC
159	Troy Andersen	LB	ATL
160	Antonio Gibson	RB	NE
161	Kimani Vidal	RB	LAC
162	Jaleel McLaughlin	RB	DEN
163	Blake Corum	RB	LAR
164	Tyler Allgeier	RB	ATL
165	DeMario Douglas	WR	NE
166	Adam Thielen	WR	CAR
167	Ladd McConkey	WR	LAC
168	Marvin Mims Jr.	WR	DEN
169	Wan'Dale Robinson	WR	NYG
170	Michael Wilson	WR	ARI
171	Rome Odunze	WR	CHI
172	Romeo Doubs	WR	GB
173	Jessie Bates III	S	ATL
174	Xavier McKinney	S	GB
175	Julian Love	S	SEA
176	Jaquan Brisker	S	CHI
177	Amani Hooker	S	TEN
178	L'Jarius Sneed	CB	TEN
179	Devon Witherspoon	CB	SEA
180	Zach Charbonnet	RB	SEA
181	Ray Davis	RB	BUF
182	Trey Benson	RB	ARI
183	Ty Chandler	RB	MIN
184	Kendre Miller	RB	NO
185	Jonathan Greenard	DE	MIN
186	Kayvon Thibodeaux	DE	NYG
187	Montez Sweat	DE	CHI
188	Roman Wilson	WR	PIT
189	Josh Downs	WR	IND
190	Joshua Palmer	WR	LAC
191	Kendrick Bourne	WR	NE
192	Jahan Dotson	WR	WAS
193	Brian Thomas Jr.	WR	JAC
194	Xavier Worthy	WR	KC
195	Darnell Mooney	WR	ATL
196	Rashod Bateman	WR	BAL
197	Darren Waller	TE	NYG
198	Tyler Conklin	TE	NYJ
199	T.J. Hockenson	TE	MIN
200	Dalton Schultz	TE	HOU
201	Aaron Rodgers	QB	NYJ
202	Tua Tagovailoa	QB	MIA
203	Jared Goff	QB	DET
204	Matthew Stafford	QB	LAR
205	Baker Mayfield	QB	TB
206	Justin Herbert	QB	LAC
207	Chuba Hubbard	RB	CAR
208	J.K. Dobbins	RB	LAC
209	Bucky Irving	RB	TB
210	Rico Dowdle	RB	DAL
211	Evan Hull	RB	IND
212	Chigoziem Okonkwo	TE	TEN
213	Luke Musgrave	TE	GB
214	Demarcus Robinson	WR	LAR
215	Dontayvion Wicks	WR	GB
216	Darius Slayton	WR	NYG
217	Jameson Williams	WR	DET
218	Quentin Johnston	WR	LAC
219	Khalil Shakir	WR	BUF
220	Deuce Vaughn	RB	DAL
221	Will Shipley	RB	PHI
222	MarShawn Lloyd	RB	GB
223	Jaylen Wright	RB	MIA
224	Deshaun Watson	QB	CLE
225	Caleb Williams	QB	CHI
226	Tyrone Tracy Jr.	RB	NYG
227	Kenneth Gainwell	RB	PHI
228	Tank Bigsby	RB	JAC
229	Brandon Aubrey	K	DAL
230	Justin Tucker	K	BAL
231	Joshua Karty	K	LAR
232	Cam Little	K	JAC
233	Matt Gay	K	IND
234	Greg Zuerlein	K	NYJ
235	Dustin Hopkins	K	CLE
236	Blake Grupe	K	NO
237	Harrison Butker	K	KC
238	Evan McPherson	K	CIN
239	Tyler Bass	K	BUF
240	Ka'imi Fairbairn	K	HOU

RK	PLAYER	POS	TEAM
35	Frankie Luvu	LB	WAS
36	Quincy Williams	LB	NYJ
37	Azeez Al-Shaair	LB	HOU
38	Will Anderson Jr.	DE	HOU
39	Khalil Mack	DE	LAC
40	Troy Andersen	LB	ATL
41	Jessie Bates III	S	ATL
42	Xavier McKinney	S	GB
43	Julian Love	S	SEA
44	Jaquan Brisker	S	CHI
45	Amani Hooker	S	TEN
46	L'Jarius Sneed	CB	TEN
47	Devon Witherspoon	CB	SEA
48	Jonathan Greenard	DE	MIN
49	Kayvon Thibodeaux	DE	NYG
50	Montez Sweat	DE	CHI
51	Trey Hendrickson	DE	CIN
52	Alex Highsmith	DE	PIT
53	Chris Jones	DT	KC
54	Haason Reddick	DE	NYJ
55	Payton Wilson	LB	PIT
56	Blake Cashman	LB	MIN
57	C.J. Mosley	LB	NYJ
58	Tremaine Edmunds	LB	CHI
59	Harold Landry III	DE	TEN
60	Brian Burns	DE	NYG
61	Kevin Byard III	S	CHI
62	Jevon Holland	S	MIA
63	Harrison Smith	S	MIN
64	Kamren Curl	S	LAR
65	Christian Wilkins	DT	LV

QB RANKINGS

Rk	Player	Team
1	Jalen Hurts	PHI
2	Josh Allen	BUF
3	Lamar Jackson	BAL
4	Patrick Mahomes	KC
5	Joe Burrow	CIN
6	Jayden Daniels	WAS
7	Dak Prescott	DAL
8	Trevor Lawrence	JAC
9	Anthony Richardson	IND
10	Jordan Love	GB
11	Kyler Murray	ARI
12	C.J. Stroud	HOU
13	Geno Smith	SEA
14	Brock Purdy	SF
15	Aaron Rodgers	NYJ
16	Tua Tagovailoa	MIA
17	Jared Goff	DET
18	Matthew Stafford	LAR
19	Baker Mayfield	TB
20	Justin Herbert	LAC
21	Deshaun Watson	CLE
22	Caleb Williams	CHI
23	Drake Maye	NE
24	Aidan O'Connell	LV
25	Will Levis	TEN
26	Bryce Young	CAR
27	Bo Nix	DEN
28	Derek Carr	NO
29	J.J. McCarthy	MIN
30	Daniel Jones	NYG
31	Kirk Cousins	ATL
32	Russell Wilson	PIT
33	Taysom Hill	NO
34	Justin Fields	PIT
35	Sam Darnold	MIN
36	Marcus Mariota	WAS
37	Jacoby Brissett	NE
38	Drew Lock	NYG
39	Michael Penix Jr.	ATL
40	Jameis Winston	CLE
41	Tyrod Taylor	NYJ
42	Kenny Pickett	PHI
43	Jimmy Garoppolo	LAR
44	Jarrett Stidham	DEN
45	Mike White	MIA
46	Joe Flacco	IND
47	Gardner Minshew	LV
48	Tyson Bagent	CHI
49	Josh Johnson	BAL
50	Sam Howell	SEA

AVERAGE DEPTH OF THROW

ADOT tracks the distance downfield each pass travels before it is complete, incomplete or intercepted. Quarterbacks with high ADOT marks generally take more chances, which will lead to more coveted big plays. Shown here are the top 40 ADOT marks among QBs who dropped back to pass at least 100 times during the 2023 season.

Player	Team	DB	ADOT
Will Levis	TEN	292	11.1
Nick Mullens	MIN	165	10.5
C.J. Stroud	HOU	618	9.3
Mitchell Trubisky	PIT	122	9.1
Tyrod Taylor	NYG	224	9.1
Joe Flacco	CLE	265	9.1
Lamar Jackson	BAL	633	9.1
Deshaun Watson	CLE	204	9.0
Baker Mayfield	TB	728	9.0
Jalen Hurts	PHI	661	8.9
Jordan Love	GB	689	8.9
Jimmy Garoppolo	LV	191	8.8
Justin Fields	CHI	457	8.8
P.J. Walker	CLE	126	8.7
Taylor Heinicke	ATL	157	8.6
Brock Purdy	SF	618	8.6
Trevor Lawrence	JAC	645	8.6
Josh Allen	BUF	732	8.6
Desmond Ridder	ATL	439	8.5
Dak Prescott	DAL	731	8.5
Ryan Tannehill	TEN	271	8.4
Justin Herbert	LAC	520	8.2
Geno Smith	SEA	553	8.2
Derek Carr	NO	588	8.2
Matthew Stafford	LAR	605	8.2
Bailey Zappe	NE	247	8.1
Tua Tagovailoa	MIA	655	8.1
Aidan O'Connell	LV	370	8.0
Joshua Dobbs	ARI/MIN	485	8.0
Zach Wilson	NYJ	439	7.9
Russell Wilson	DEN	530	7.8
Gardner Minshew	IND	546	7.8
Bryce Young	CAR	622	7.8
Kirk Cousins	MIN	331	7.7
Sam Howell	WAS	712	7.7
Mason Rudolph	PIT	125	7.5
Easton Stick	LAC	198	7.5
Kyler Murray	ARI	304	7.5
Kenny Pickett	PIT	363	7.5
Mac Jones	NE	379	7.4

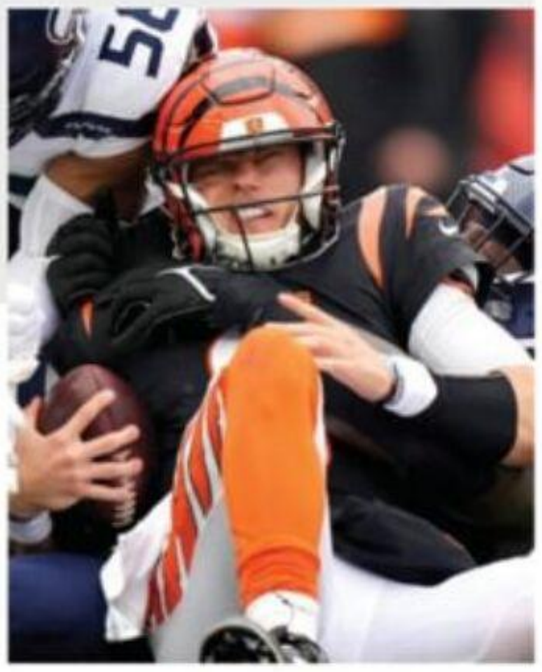
(MIN 40 TARGETS, INCLUDING PLAYOFFS)

SOURCE: PRO FOOTBALL FOCUS

INJURY CONCERNS

JOE BURROW, CINCINNATI BENGALS

Burrow tore a ligament in his wrist in Week 11 and needed surgery. He had also struggled at the beginning of the season as he was working through a calf injury.



KAREEM ELGAZZAR/THE ENQUIRER

DEREK CARR, NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

Carr played through rib fractures, a shoulder injury and a concussion in 2023. He left games early and was questionable heading into many weeks. While he didn't miss time, it was hard to trust him to stay in the game each week.

KIRK COUSINS, ATLANTA FALCONS

Cousins is 36 years old and is coming off a torn Achilles tendon in Week 8 of the 2023 season. While it seems that his recovery and rehab are going well, his age makes it tougher.

LAMAR JACKSON, BALTIMORE RAVENS

By adding Derrick Henry to the roster, the Ravens are hoping that Jackson will run less often. However, that's not his usual style. He didn't miss time in 2023, but he's always an injury risk.

DANIEL JONES, NEW YORK GIANTS

It is possible Jones won't be the starter, but he needs to get healthy in any event. Jones suffered a torn ACL in Week 9 and had surgery to repair it.

KYLER MURRAY, ARIZONA CARDINALS

Murray tore his ACL in Week 14 of the 2022 season, and it took him a while to get back on the field. He made his 2023 debut in Week 10 and played through the end of the season, but he never looked fully healthy.

ANTHONY RICHARDSON, INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

Richardson started the 2023 season with a ton of fantasy promise, but he suffered a season-ending shoulder injury in Week 4. His shoulder should be fine for 2024, but his style of play lends itself to injuries.

AARON RODGERS, NEW YORK JETS

Rodgers will turn 41 this season, and he — like Cousins — is coming off a torn Achilles tendon.

TUA TAGOVAILOA, MIAMI DOLPHINS

Despite head and shoulder injuries, Tagovailoa didn't miss a game in the 2023 season. His 2022 season was a different story, and any time Tagovailoa takes the field, fantasy managers hold their breath.

DESHAUN WATSON, CLEVELAND BROWNS

Between an ankle injury and a shoulder injury, Watson had a rough 2023. He had surgery on his shoulder in November but should be ready to go in Week 1.

RB RANKINGS

	Rk	Player	Team
☐	1	Christian McCaffrey	SF
☐	2	Breece Hall	NYJ
☐	3	Bijan Robinson	ATL
☐	4	Jonathan Taylor	IND
☐	5	Derrick Henry	BAL
☐	6	Saquon Barkley	PHI
☐	7	Travis Etienne Jr.	JAC
☐	8	Kyren Williams	LAR
☐	9	Isiah Pacheco	KC
☐	10	Kenneth Walker III	SEA
☐	11	De'Von Achane	MIA
☐	12	Joe Mixon	HOU
☐	13	Jahmyr Gibbs	DET
☐	14	James Cook	BUF
☐	15	Josh Jacobs	GB
☐	16	Zamir White	LV
☐	17	Aaron Jones	MIN
☐	18	Javonte Williams	DEN
☐	19	Rhamondre Stevenson	NE
☐	20	David Montgomery	DET
☐	21	Raheem Mostert	MIA
☐	22	D'Andre Swift	CHI
☐	23	Rachaad White	TB
☐	24	Jaylen Warren	PIT
☐	25	Zack Moss	CIN
☐	26	Devin Singletary	NYG
☐	27	James Conner	ARI
☐	28	Tony Pollard	TEN
☐	29	Alvin Kamara	NO
☐	30	Najee Harris	PIT
☐	31	Jonathon Brooks	CAR
☐	32	Gus Edwards	LAC
☐	33	Austin Ekeler	WAS
☐	34	Brian Robinson Jr.	WAS
☐	35	Ezekiel Elliott	DAL
☐	36	Nick Chubb	CLE
☐	37	Jerome Ford	CLE
☐	38	Chase Brown	CIN
☐	39	Tyjae Spears	TEN
☐	40	Antonio Gibson	NE
☐	41	Kimani Vidal	LAC
☐	42	Jaleel McLaughlin	DEN
☐	43	Blake Corum	LAR
☐	44	Tyler Allgeier	ATL
☐	45	Zach Charbonnet	SEA
☐	46	Ray Davis	BUF
☐	47	Trey Benson	ARI
☐	48	Ty Chandler	MIN
☐	49	Kendre Miller	NO
☐	50	Chuba Hubbard	CAR
☐	51	J.K. Dobbins	LAC
☐	52	Bucky Irving	TB
☐	53	Rico Dowdle	DAL
☐	54	Evan Hull	IND
☐	55	Deuce Vaughn	DAL
☐	56	Will Shipley	PHI
☐	57	MarShawn Lloyd	GB
☐	58	Jaylen Wright	MIA
☐	59	Tyrone Tracy	NYG
☐	60	Kenneth Gainwell	PHI
☐	61	Tank Bigsby	JAC
☐	62	Khalil Herbert	CHI
☐	63	Alexander Mattison	LV
☐	64	D'Onta Foreman	CLE
☐	65	Dameon Pierce	HOU
☐	66	Audric Estime	DEN
☐	67	Miles Sanders	CAR
☐	68	Roschon Johnson	CHI
☐	69	Clyde Edwards-Helaire	KC
☐	70	Dylan Laube	LV

WORKLOAD WATCH

	Touch/Game, 3-Yr	TCH	TPG	GP
1	Najee Harris	978	19.2	51
2	Josh Jacobs	934	20.8	45
3	Derrick Henry	927	22.6	41
4	Joe Mixon	913	19.4	47
5	Saquon Barkley	843	19.6	43
6	Alvin Kamara	822	20.0	41
7	Austin Ekeler	817	17.4	47
8	Christian McCaffrey	804	20.1	40
9	Jonathan Taylor	780	20.5	38
10	Ezekiel Elliott	767	15.7	49
11	David Montgomery	737	17.1	43
12	Tony Pollard	708	14.8	48
13	James Conner	703	17.1	41
14	Devin Singletary	689	13.8	50
15	Dalvin Cook	668	14.8	45

	Touch/Game, 2-Yr	TCH	TPG	GP
1	Derrick Henry	690	20.9	33
2	Christian McCaffrey	668	20.2	33
3	Josh Jacobs	663	22.1	30
4	Saquon Barkley	640	21.3	30
5	Najee Harris	597	17.6	34
6	Travis Etienne Jr.	580	17.1	34
7	Joe Mixon	579	18.7	31
8	Austin Ekeler	541	17.5	31
9	Tony Pollard	539	16.3	33
10	Alvin Kamara	535	19.1	28
11	Rachaad White	515	15.1	34
12	Kenneth Walker III	503	16.8	30
13	Ezekiel Elliott	483	15.1	32
14	Rhamondre Stevenson	473	16.3	29
15	David Montgomery	470	15.7	30

KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS

INJURY CONCERNS

DE'VON ACHANE, MIAMI DOLPHINS

In his rookie year, Achane missed time in the middle of the season with a knee injury. He returned, only to deal with a toe injury. If he can stay healthy, he is a promising player.

JONATHAN BROOKS, CAROLINA PANTHERS

Brooks may have been the best running back in the 2024 draft class, except for the fact that he tore his ACL in November and had surgery. He'll be coming back from that rehab and learning an NFL offense.

NICK CHUBB, CLEVELAND BROWNS

Chubb suffered a gruesome knee injury in Week 2, which is not going to be easy to come back from. It will be a tough road back for the four-time Pro Bowler.

JAMES CONNER, ARIZONA CARDINALS

Conner had an I.R. stint in the middle of the season because of a knee injury. He has yet to play a full season in his seven years in the league.

J.K. DOBBINS, LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

Between the torn ACL in 2021 and the torn Achilles tendon in Week 1 of the 2023 season, Dobbins has been prone to major injuries throughout his career.

BREECE HALL, NEW YORK JETS

After tearing his ACL in 2022, he was on a pitch count when he got back on the field. He dealt with ankle and hamstring injuries throughout the 2023 season but didn't miss time. He is an RB1, but with injury risk.

JOSH JACOBS, GREEN BAY PACKERS

Jacobs suffered a quad injury at the end of the 2023 season that cost him time after dealing with a knee injury earlier in the season.

JONATHAN TAYLOR, INDIANAPOLIS COLTS

Between a thumb injury, a heel injury and an ankle injury, Taylor's 2023 season was tough for fantasy owners, making it hard to trust him to stay healthy moving forward.

KENNETH WALKER III, SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

Walker missed only one week, but he dealt with oblique, shoulder, chest and calf injuries throughout 2023. He's not going to be the Seahawks' primary running back, but he needs to stay healthy.

JAMAAL WILLIAMS, NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

Williams dealt with a hamstring injury in 2023 and never really seemed to be at full strength. He will continue to play behind Alvin Kamara, which also cuts into his value.

WR RANKINGS

Rk	Player	Team
☐ 1	CeeDee Lamb	DAL
☐ 2	Tyreek Hill	MIA
☐ 3	Ja'Marr Chase	CIN
☐ 4	Justin Jefferson	MIN
☐ 5	Amon-Ra St. Brown	DET
☐ 6	Garrett Wilson	NYJ
☐ 7	Puka Nacua	LAR
☐ 8	A.J. Brown	PHI
☐ 9	Cooper Kupp	LAR
☐ 10	Deebo Samuel	SF
☐ 11	Davante Adams	LV
☐ 12	Jaylen Waddle	MIA
☐ 13	Christian Kirk	JAC
☐ 14	Tee Higgins	CIN
☐ 15	Rashee Rice	KC
☐ 16	Mike Evans	TB
☐ 17	Brandon Aiyuk	SF
☐ 18	Drake London	ATL
☐ 19	DK Metcalf	SEA
☐ 20	Michael Pittman Jr.	IND
☐ 21	Chris Olave	NO
☐ 22	Terry McLaurin	WAS
☐ 23	Marvin Harrison Jr.	ARI
☐ 24	Jayden Reed	GB
☐ 25	Amari Cooper	CLE
☐ 26	DJ Moore	CHI
☐ 27	Chris Godwin	TB
☐ 28	Malik Nabers	NYG
☐ 29	DeVonta Smith	PHI
☐ 30	George Pickens	PIT
☐ 31	Nico Collins	HOU
☐ 32	Stefon Diggs	HOU
☐ 33	Tyler Lockett	SEA
☐ 34	Diontae Johnson	CAR
☐ 35	DeAndre Hopkins	TEN
☐ 36	Zay Flowers	BAL
☐ 37	Courtland Sutton	DEN
☐ 38	Calvin Ridley	TEN
☐ 39	Jordan Addison	MIN
☐ 40	Tank Dell	HOU
☐ 41	Keon Coleman	BUF
☐ 42	Mike Williams	NYJ
☐ 43	Marquise Brown	KC
☐ 44	Curtis Samuel	BUF
☐ 45	Jakobi Meyers	LV
☐ 46	Christian Watson	GB
☐ 47	Brandin Cooks	DAL
☐ 48	Gabe Davis	JAC
☐ 49	Jerry Jeudy	CLE
☐ 50	Rashid Shaheed	NO
☐ 51	Jaxon Smith-Njigba	SEA
☐ 52	Keenan Allen	CHI
☐ 53	Demario Douglas	NE
☐ 54	Adam Thielen	CAR
☐ 55	Ladd McConkey	LAC
☐ 56	Marvin Mims Jr.	DEN
☐ 57	Wan'Dale Robinson	NYG
☐ 58	Michael Wilson	ARI
☐ 59	Rome Odunze	CHI
☐ 60	Romeo Doubs	GB

AVERAGE DEPTH OF TARGET

TOP WRs

Player	Team	Targets	ADOT
Jalin Hyatt	NYG	40	20.7
Justin Watson	KC	62	17.9
Marquez Valdes-Scantling	KC	52	17.8
Van Jefferson	ATL	42	16.9
Jameson Williams	DET	51	16.4
Christian Watson	GB	56	16.2
Alec Pierce	IND	63	15.7
Gabe Davis	BUF	78	15.6
DJ Chark Jr.	CAR	62	15.2
Mike Evans	TB	146	15.1
Odell Beckham Jr.	BAL	69	15.0
DeAndre Hopkins	TEN	133	14.8
Rashod Bateman	BAL	61	14.6
Rashid Shaheed	NO	71	14.6
Brandon Aiyuk	SF	120	14.6
Tank Dell	HOU	74	14.4
Demarcus Robinson	LAR	45	14.1
Michael Wilson	ARI	59	14.1

BOTTOM WRs

Player	Team	Targets	ADOT
Rashee Rice	KC	131	5.0
Wan'Dale Robinson	NYG	76	5.5
Rondale Moore	ARI	61	6.3
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	SEA	90	6.4
Curtis Samuel	WAS	85	7.1
Tyler Boyd	CIN	91	7.2
Josh Downs	IND	94	7.4
Khalil Shakir	BUF	56	7.4
Deebo Samuel	SF	109	7.5
JuJu Smith-Schuster	NE	46	7.5
Allen Robinson II	PIT	49	7.6
Amon-Ra St. Brown	DET	190	8.0
Adam Thielen	CAR	136	8.0
DeMario Douglas	NE	76	8.0
Michael Pittman Jr.	IND	150	8.1
Brandon Powell	MIN	43	8.4
Cooper Kupp	LAR	100	8.6
Kalif Raymond	DET	43	8.8

(MIN 40 TARGETS, INCLUDING PLAYOFFS)

SOURCE: PRO FOOTBALL FOCUS

INJURY CONCERNS

KEENAN ALLEN, CHICAGO BEARS

Allen has missed 11 games in the past two seasons. A heel injury plagued him at the end of the 2023 season, but he also dealt with quad and shoulder injuries. He is a solid player but is oft-injured.

KENDRICK BOURNE, NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

Bourne tore his ACL in Week 8 of the 2023 season, but he expects to be ready for training camp. He has not missed a ton of time in his career, but coming back from an ACL is always tough.

TANK DELL, HOUSTON TEXANS

Dell's promising rookie season was cut short when he fractured his fibula and required surgery after Week 13. He should be healthy for the beginning of the season and will join Nico Collins and new running mate Stefon Diggs on the field.

CHRISTIAN KIRK, JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

Kirk injured his groin/core and required surgery following Week 13, but he should be fine for Week 1 of the 2024 season. He has stayed fairly healthy throughout his career, but this is something to keep an eye on.

COOPER KUPP, LOS ANGELES RAMS

After missing the beginning of the season because of a hamstring injury, Kupp never returned to the WR1 status that fantasy owners had been hoping for. He dealt with an ankle injury mid-season as well, and the emergence of Puka Nacua put a damper on his fantasy value.

TIM PATRICK, DENVER BRONCOS

Fantasy managers may have forgotten about Patrick as he didn't play a snap in 2023 after tearing his Achilles tendon in July. Patrick also missed all of the 2022 season because of a torn ACL. He has potential but is hard to trust.

DEEBO SAMUEL, SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

Samuel suffered a mid-season shoulder injury that cost him some time and kept him popping up on the injury report even once he returned to the field. He also had a neck injury at the end of the season. He has played a full season only once in his five years in the league.

MICHAEL THOMAS, FREE AGENT

Thomas has been plagued by injuries for years, and 2023 was no exception. A knee injury ended his season in Week 10, but those 10 games were the most he's played in the past four years.

KADARIUS TONEY, KANSAS CITY CHIEFS

Toney had ankle and hip issues but also was a healthy scratch for the Chiefs in 2023. With Rashee Rice likely missing time due to an off-field incident, Toney may have to step up, assuming he can avoid further injuries.

MIKE WILLIAMS, NEW YORK JETS

Formerly of the Los Angeles Chargers, Williams joins the Jets after missing most of the 2023 season with a torn ACL. He looked good before the injury, but three games is hardly a sample size. He will likely be injured again at some point in 2024 based on his history.

TE RANKINGS

Rk	Player	Team
1	Travis Kelce	KC
2	Mark Andrews	BAL
3	Sam LaPorta	DET
4	Dalton Kincaid	BUF
5	Evan Engram	JAC
6	Trey McBride	ARI
7	Kyle Pitts	ATL
8	Jake Ferguson	DAL
9	David Njoku	CLE
10	Dallas Goedert	PHI
11	George Kittle	SF
12	Brock Bowers	LV
13	Noah Fant	SEA
14	Pat Freiermuth	PIT
15	Darren Waller	NYG
16	Tyler Conklin	NYJ
17	T.J. Hockenson	MIN
18	Dalton Schultz	HOU
19	Chigoziem Okonkwo	TEN
20	Luke Musgrave	GB
21	Hunter Henry	NE
22	Juwan Johnson	NO
23	Cole Kmet	CHI
24	Greg Dulcich	DEN
25	Colby Parkinson	LAR
26	Cade Otton	TB
27	Mike Gesicki	CIN
28	Jelani Woods	IND
29	Michael Mayer	LV
30	Ben Sinnott	WAS
31	Zach Ertz	WAS
32	Jonnu Smith	MIA
33	Hayden Hurst	LAC
34	Will Dissly	LAC
35	Ja'Tavion Sanders	CAR
36	Dawson Knox	BUF
37	Isaiah Likely	BAL
38	Gerald Everett	CHI
39	Erick All	CIN
40	Tucker Kraft	GB

AVERAGE DEPTH OF TARGET

Player	Team	Targets	ADOT
Kyle Pitts	ATL	86	12.0
George Kittle	SF	101	9.9
Hunter Henry	NE	62	9.4
Mike Gesicki	NE	43	9.3
Donald Parham Jr.	LAC	40	8.7
Dalton Schultz	HOU	93	8.7
Kylen Granson	IND	47	8.4
Mark Andrews	BAL	62	8.2
Juwan Johnson	NO	58	8.0
Darren Waller	NYG	72	7.9
Tyler Conklin	NYJ	83	7.7
T.J. Hockenson	MIN	124	7.6
Noah Fant	SEA	42	7.5
Isaiah Likely	BAL	43	7.4
Pat Freiermuth	PIT	50	7.4
Luke Musgrave	GB	52	7.4
Sam LaPorta	DET	144	7.2
Zach Ertz	ARI	42	7.0
Noah Gray	KC	50	7.0
Chigoziem Okonkwo	TEN	74	7.0
Cole Kmet	CHI	88	7.0
Dalton Kincaid	BUF	101	7.0
Travis Kelce	KC	155	7.0

(MIN 30 TARGETS, INCLUDING PLAYOFFS)

For wide receivers and tight ends, ADOT removes volatile YAC (yards after catch) from the equation, instead focusing only on the average distance the player is downfield on each target. It's an indicator of big-play potential.

INJURY CONCERNS

MARK ANDREWS, BALTIMORE RAVENS

In Week 11, Andrews injured his ankle and cracked his fibula and missed the rest of the regular season. He also started the season with an injured quad. It is going to be tough for Andrews to stay healthy based on his history.

GREG DULCICH, DENVER BRONCOS

Prior to the 2023 season, Dulcich was a fantasy sleeper. He ended up playing in only two games because of foot and hamstring injuries. The hamstring was nagging all season; Dulcich likely won't be a sleeper heading into 2024.

ZACH ERTZ, WASHINGTON COMMANDERS

Ertz suffered a quad injury after Week 7 and ended up missing the rest of the 2023 season. He is now with the Commanders and should be a low TE2, assuming he can stay healthy.

DALLAS GOEDERT, PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

Goedert suffered an arm injury in Week 9 and didn't return until Week 14. He hasn't played a full season since 2018 and is an injury concern moving forward.

TYLER HIGBEE, LOS ANGELES RAMS

Suffering a torn ACL and MCL in January 2024, Higbee will struggle to rehab enough to get back on the field for the beginning of the season. Ideally, Higbee will be on the field by the middle of the season, but even that is not a guarantee.

T.J. HOCKENSON, MINNESOTA VIKINGS

Hockenson tore his ACL and MCL and had surgery in January 2024. Similar to Higbee, his timeline to get back on the field looks like it will extend until the middle of the 2024 season.

HAYDEN HURST, LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

Hurst's 2023 season ended as a result of a concussion that caused lingering symptoms. He missed the last eight games of the season. There is reason to be concerned that if he suffers another head injury, his season may be over.

DAWSON KNOX, BUFFALO BILLS

When you have to have your wrist surgically repaired in the middle of the season, it makes it tough to put up good numbers. Knox did return to the field, but his production didn't match the beginning of the season.

LUKE MUSGRAVE, GREEN BAY PACKERS

Musgrave suffered a lacerated kidney in Week 11, which kept him out until the final game of the regular season. Fantasy managers should keep in mind that he also dealt with an ankle injury throughout the season.

DARREN WALLER, NEW YORK GIANTS

Assuming Waller does not retire, he has a long history of injuries. He missed time in 2023 because of a hamstring injury, but he also missed practice time with a groin injury earlier in the season. It is safe to assume that 2024 will be more of the same.

D/ST RANKINGS

Rk	Team	Rk	Team	Rk	Team
☐ 1	Dallas	☐ 12	Chicago	☐ 23	New York Giants
☐ 2	Indianapolis	☐ 13	Detroit	☐ 24	Cincinnati
☐ 3	Philadelphia	☐ 14	Denver	☐ 25	Washington
☐ 4	New York Jets	☐ 15	Seattle	☐ 26	Minnesota
☐ 5	New England	☐ 16	New Orleans	☐ 27	Las Vegas
☐ 6	Cleveland	☐ 17	Pittsburgh	☐ 28	Tennessee
☐ 7	San Francisco	☐ 18	Green Bay	☐ 29	Buffalo
☐ 8	Baltimore	☐ 19	LA Chargers	☐ 30	Atlanta
☐ 9	Kansas City	☐ 20	Arizona	☐ 31	Carolina
☐ 10	Houston	☐ 21	Tampa Bay	☐ 32	LA Rams
☐ 11	Jacksonville	☐ 22	Miami		

▲ GOING UP

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

When the Eagles added Quinyon Mitchell and Jalyx Hunt in the NFL Draft, they elevated their DST. Mitchell has the potential to be a shutdown corner, and Hunt on the edge will help their pass rush. These two alone should help their DST rise from the bottom half of the league to perhaps the top five. The Eagles had only 43 sacks and nine interceptions last year (both figures putting them in the bottom half of the league). Adding these new pieces should boost their value.

DETROIT LIONS

After drafting Terron Arnold at cornerback, the Lions DST takes a jump up. The Lions desperately needed help at this position, and Arnold can provide it. They also added Steele Chambers to their linebacker group. Chambers did well at Ohio State, and that should carry into the NFL. The Detroit DST did fare well in terms of interceptions, but they couldn't do much else in 2023. Their new additions should make the Lions a team to target on draft day. Their current projected schedule appears on the easy side; this DST will likely perform better than last year.

CLEVELAND BROWNS

The Browns have the easiest schedule in 2024, and their DST could be one of the top five off the board on draft day. They performed well in 2023, and that should continue, as they strengthened their defensive roster via the draft. Defensive tackle Jowon Briggs was added to the roster, and while he may not make a big impact this year, he will certainly add depth to the team. Michael Hall Jr., however, should help the team right away. At linebacker, Nathaniel Watson will help the defensive line, and cornerback Myles Harden will add to a group that will be formidable in 2024.

▼ GOING DOWN

MIAMI DOLPHINS

The Dolphins finished in the top five in fantasy DSTs (depending on league scoring), but this unit doesn't appear to be as strong in 2024. As the Dolphins struggled for cap space, they ended up losing cornerback Xavien Howard, linebacker Jerome Baker, pass-rusher Emmanuel Ogbah, edge Andrew Van Ginkel and defensive tackle Christian Wilkins. These are some of the best defensive players the Dolphins had on their roster, and losing them is going to hurt. They did add some new players through the draft, but this defense does not appear to be as strong as last year's, when it ranked 10th in total defense.

BUFFALO BILLS

Similar to the Dolphins, the Bills have bid farewell to some key defensive players: cornerback Tre'Davious White, safety Jordan Poyer, defensive end Leonard Floyd. In 2023, the Bills defense was in the top five overall. They had the fourth-most sacks in the league, tied for second-most interceptions and ranked ninth in total defense. The Bills unit was a solid fantasy start each week, and they will likely be drafted in 2024, but managers may not feel as confident starting them.

BALTIMORE RAVENS

The Ravens lost 15 players, including a number of key defensive players, in the offseason. These losses include linebacker Patrick Queen, edge Jadeveon Clowney and safety Geno Stone. The Ravens tied for the second-most interceptions in the league — thanks largely to Stone. With him gone, the team is going to need others to step up and make plays.

FROM LEFT: BILL STREICHER-USA TODAY SPORTS; SAM NAVARRO-USA TODAY SPORTS

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AFC PREDICTIONS

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH FOR THE FOUR DIVISIONS

AFC PLAYOFF SEEDS

1. Kansas City Chiefs
2. Baltimore Ravens
3. Houston Texans
4. Miami Dolphins
5. Cincinnati Bengals
6. Buffalo Bills
7. Jacksonville Jaguars

WILD CARD WEEKEND

Ravens over Jaguars

Texans over Bills

Bengals over Dolphins

DIVISIONAL ROUND

Bengals over Chiefs

Ravens over Texans

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

Ravens over Bengals

SUPER BOWL LIX

Ravens over Lions

AFC EAST

1. Miami DOLPHINS
2. Buffalo BILLS
3. New York JETS
4. New England PATRIOTS

AFC NORTH

1. Baltimore RAVENS
2. Cincinnati BENGALS
3. Pittsburgh STEELERS
4. Cleveland BROWNS

AFC SOUTH

1. Houston TEXANS
2. Jacksonville JAGUARS
3. Indianapolis COLTS
4. Tennessee TITANS

AFC WEST

1. Kansas City CHIEFS
2. Los Angeles CHARGERS
3. Las Vegas RAIDERS
4. Denver BRONCOS

AFC POWER RANKINGS

1. Kansas City Chiefs
2. Baltimore Ravens
3. Cincinnati Bengals
4. Houston Texans
5. Miami Dolphins
6. Buffalo Bills
7. Jacksonville Jaguars
8. New York Jets
9. Los Angeles Chargers
10. Indianapolis Colts
11. Pittsburgh Steelers
12. Cleveland Browns
13. Tennessee Titans
14. Las Vegas Raiders
15. Denver Broncos
16. New England Patriots

SUPERLATIVES

Offensive Player of the Year
TYREEK HILL, DOLPHINS

Defensive Player of the Year
MAXX CROSBY, RAIDERS

Comeback Player of the Year
AARON RODGERS, JETS

Offensive Rookie of the Year
XAVIER WORTHY, CHIEFS

Defensive Rookie of the Year
LAIATU LATU, COLTS

Coach of the Year
DEMECO RYANS, TEXANS

AFC COACHING CAROUSEL

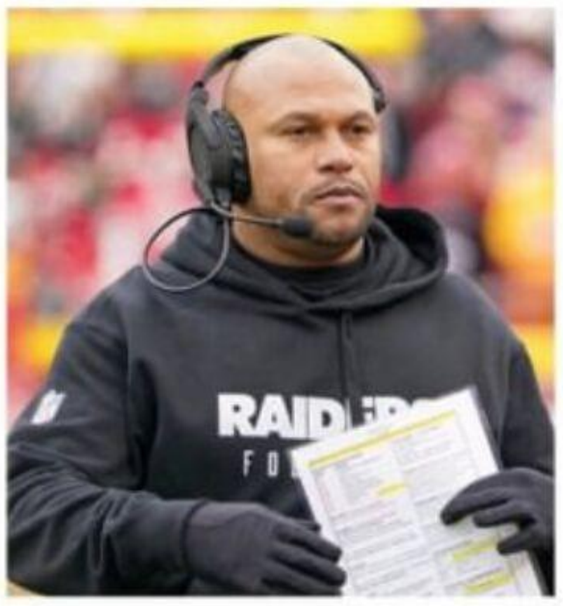
HEAD COACHES

LAS VEGAS RAIDERS

New: Antonio Pierce

Old: Todd McDaniels

Pierce won over the Raiders' locker room during his nine-game audition in 2023 following Josh McDaniels' firing, and he also won more games than he lost (5-4). Players' coaches don't always have staying power, but Pierce's squad seems ready to go to war for him.



LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

New: Jim Harbaugh

Old: Brandon Staley

Harbaugh is fresh off a national championship at Michigan, and he has a track record of success in the NFL with the 49ers. Sure, Harbaugh has his quirks, but he also builds winners. This one feels like a home-run hire.

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

New: Jerod Mayo

Old: Bill Belichick

Continuity is the theme here, as Mayo is a longtime Belichick lieutenant who will maintain his predecessor's emphasis on defense — although his future will be largely tied to first-round quarterback Drake Maye.

TENNESSEE TITANS

New: Brian Callahan

Old: Mike Vrabel

Callahan inherits a surprisingly favorable situation, thanks to a lot of splash offseason moves by Titans general manager Ran Carthon. Callahan will be looking to his dad, Bill, to work his magic with a previously porous Titans O-line.

PIERCE: DENNY MEDLEY-USA TODAY SPORTS; HARBAUGH: KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS; MAYO: ERIC CANHA-USA TODAY SPORTS; CALLAHAN: DENNY SIMMONS / THE TENNESSEAN; BRADY: JOE BRADY; PITCHER: PHIL DIDION/THE ENQUIRER; SMITH: DALE ZANINE-USA TODAY SPORTS

COORDINATORS

BALTIMORE RAVENS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Zachary Orr

Old: Mike Macdonald

BUFFALO BILLS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Joe Brady (promoted from interim)

Old: Ken Dorsey

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Bobby Babich

Old: Sean McDermott

CINCINNATI BENGALS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Dan Pitcher

Old: Brian Callahan

CLEVELAND BROWNS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Ken Dorsey

Old: Alex Van Pelt

JACKSONVILLE JAGUARS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Ryan Nielsen

Old: Mike Caldwell

LAS VEGAS RAIDERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Luke Getsy

Old: Mick Lombardi

LOS ANGELES CHARGERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Greg Roman

Old: Kellen Moore

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Jesse Minter

Old: Derrick Ansley

MIAMI DOLPHINS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Anthony Weaver

Old: Vic Fangio

NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Alex Van Pelt

Old: Bill O'Brien

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: DeMarcus Covington

Old: None

PITTSBURGH STEELERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Arthur Smith

Old: Matt Canada

TENNESSEE TITANS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Nick Holz

Old: Tim Kelly

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Dennard Wilson

Old: Shane Bowen

BILLS

AFC EAST FORECAST

2

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	Arizona	1:00
Sept. 12	at Miami	8:15
Sept. 23	Jacksonville	7:30
Sept. 29	at Baltimore	8:20
Oct. 6	at Houston	1:00
Oct. 14	at N.Y. Jets	8:15
Oct. 20	Tennessee	1:00
Oct. 27	at Seattle	4:05
Nov. 3	Miami	1:00
Nov. 10	at Indianapolis	1:00
Nov. 17	Kansas City	4:25
Nov. 24	BYE	
Dec. 1	San Francisco	8:20
Dec. 8	at L.A. Rams	4:25
Dec. 15	at Detroit	4:25
Dec. 22	New England	1:00
Dec. 29	N.Y. Jets	1:00
Jan. 4/5	at New England	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Sean McDermott
Record With Team: 73-41
Career Record: 73-41
Offensive Coordinator: Joe Brady
Defensive Coordinator: Bobby Babich
Special Teams Coordinator: Matthew Smiley
Quarterbacks: Ronald Curry
Running Backs: Kelly Skipper
Wide Receivers: Adam Henry
Tight Ends: Rob Boras
Offensive Line: Aaron Kromer
Defensive Line: Marcus West
Linebackers: Al Holcomb
Cornerbacks: Jahmile Addai
Safeties: Joe Danna

There is no sense of panic inside the walls at One Bills Drive after back-to-back home postseason flameouts, but that doesn't mean there isn't a recognition that after four straight AFC East division titles, the Bills don't have much else to show for all that success.

"Good season overall, obviously not the result, the ultimate goal that we were looking to accomplish," head coach Sean McDermott said when 2023 ended with yet another playoff loss to their arch nemesis, the Chiefs. "When you can have the success that we've had through six out of seven years in the playoffs, I think it's significant and hard to do.

"We came here to win, and win is what we've done, quite honestly. We have not reached that ultimate goal, however."

Only the Chiefs, who have served as the chief impediment in the Bills' pursuit of an elusive Super Bowl title, have currently been to the postseason in more consecutive seasons (nine) than Buffalo's five. But three times in the last four years, the Bills were drummed out by Kansas City — in the AFC Championship Game following the 2020 season and the 2021 and '23 divisional rounds.

And while the Chiefs show no signs of slowing down, the Bills are entering into a bit of a transitional season in 2024 with a new offensive coordinator (Joe Brady), a new defensive coordinator (Bobby Babich) and an offense that for the first time since 2020 will not have superstar wide receiver Stefon Diggs (traded to Houston).

"This is season eight for us," general manager Brandon Beane says of his partnership with McDermott. "And we're frustrated as ever (about the playoff losses). It's getting harder, it's not going to get easier. But experience helps, and we know some of the landmines that we have to navigate. We're confident that at the right time we'll get it done."

OFFENSE

The Bills have been an offensive juggernaut ever since Josh Allen's breakout season in 2020. Over the last four years, the Bills have produced four of the five highest-scoring seasons in team history, and in those four years, twice they ranked No. 2 in the league in yards gained and were fourth and fifth in the other two.

But now, they will not have Diggs, nor will they have No. 2 receiver Gabe Davis, who left via free agency. They will have to rely on a mostly new cast of receivers, including free agent Curtis Samuel and second-round draft pick Keon Coleman, and they will also need third-year pro Khalil Shakir — who began to emerge as a weapon in 2023 — to take on a bigger role in the attack.

The key, however, is second-year tight end Dalton Kincaid. As a rookie, he set franchise records for most catches (73) and receiving yards (673) by a tight end, and with all those Diggs and Davis targets out the door, Brady may explore revolving the offense around Kincaid in the same way Kansas City does with Travis Kelce.

Kincaid was not a big downfield threat last season, so he will need to extend his route tree and take advantage of his athleticism and speed to improve on his 9.2 yards per catch average. Just 29 of his receptions resulted in first downs, ranking 13th among all tight ends.

James Cook is the other key component. He's coming off a solid 2023 in which he finished sixth in the NFL in yards gained from scrimmage with 1,567. When Brady took over as the coordinator at midseason, he relied a little more

JAMIE GERMANO/ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE

on the ground game with Cook, and he will certainly want to reprise that philosophy to help ease some of the massive burden Allen has on his shoulders.

DEFENSE

In four of the last five seasons, McDermott's defense has ranked in the top 10 in both points and yards allowed, but here's the thing: In all five seasons, the defense put forth mostly terrible performances in the playoff losses that ended each one. Whether it has been untimely injuries, mental and/or physical breakdowns at the worst times or dysfunctional strategy, the Bills defense has let the team down, arguably costing the team two Super Bowl trips.

And now, McDermott and Babich have a mighty task ahead of them. Gone is the superb safety duo of Micah Hyde and Jordan Poyer, as well cornerback Tre'Davious White and leading sacker Leonard Floyd.

The Bills desperately need for Von Miller to give them something after a season with zero production, and fellow edge rushers Greg Rousseau and A.J. Epenesa have to become more dangerous because right now they scare no one.

At linebacker, Terrel Bernard looks like a star in the making, but Matt Milano — already a star — can't stay healthy, and his return to Pro Bowl-caliber performer is also a must.

In the secondary, the new safety tandem of Mike Edwards and Taylor Rapp and rookie second-round pick Cole Bishop have a gargantuan task in trying to replicate what Poyer and Hyde gave Buffalo for seven years. Cornerback Rasul Douglas led the team with four interceptions in 2023.

SPECIALISTS

After a 2022 season when the Bills' special teams were among the best in the NFL across the board, they were among the worst in 2023. It started on opening night when they gave up a walk-off punt return touchdown to the Jets, and it ended with Tyler Bass missing a 44-yard field goal that would have tied their AFC divisional playoff game with 1:43 remaining.

Bass, who was so reliable in his first three seasons that he earned a sizable contract extension, missed a total of eight field goals in 2023, including three in the two postseason games. And punter Sam Martin regressed after his first year with the Bills to the point that the team re-signed its punter from 2021, Matt Haack, to create competition in training camp.

The Bills also need to find a way to improve their return game because they have lacked a viable playmaker on kickoffs and punts since Andre Roberts in 2020. Shakir and Ty Johnson have only dabbled, so someone is going to have to emerge.

FINAL ANALYSIS

There has been plenty of talk about the Bills' proverbial Super Bowl window slamming shut after their back-to-back season-ending home-field playoff losses, but as long as Allen is still living in the stratosphere with the other Hall of Fame-track quarterbacks in the league, that simply isn't the case.

"No, not at all," Allen says of the window narrowing. "I believe in what we've got going on here and the people that are in charge. I believe in myself. And that'll never change."

However, this will be Allen's most challenging season in that he won't have longtime center Mitch Morse in front of him; he won't have Diggs, with whom he formed one of the most productive tandems in the NFL; and he has to develop relationships with newcomers Samuel and Coleman.

And that will all have to come together quickly because the AFC East is gaining on the Bills, and all three teams that have trailed Buffalo for four years are expected to be better.

BUF

2023 RESULTS (11-6)

Sept.	11	at N.Y. Jets (ot)	L	16-22
Sept.	17	Las Vegas	W	38-10
Sept.	24	at Washington	W	37-3
Oct.	1	Miami	W	48-20
Oct.	8	Jacksonville	L	20-25
Oct.	15	N.Y. Giants	W	14-9
Oct.	22	at New England	L	25-29
Oct.	26	Tampa Bay	W	24-18
Nov.	5	at Cincinnati	L	18-24
Nov.	13	Denver	L	22-24
Nov.	19	N.Y. Jets	W	32-6
Nov.	26	at Philadelphia (ot)	L	34-37
Dec.	10	at Kansas City	W	20-17
Dec.	17	Dallas	W	31-10
Dec.	23	at L.A. Chargers	W	24-22
Dec.	31	New England	W	27-21
Jan.	7	at Miami	W	21-14
Postseason				
Jan.	15	Pittsburgh	W	31-17
Jan.	21	Kansas City	L	24-27

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	374.5	4	2
Rushing	130.1	7	3
Passing	244.4	8	4
Scoring	26.5	6	3
Third Down %	49.8	1	1
Points/Play	0.402	6	3

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	307.2	9	6
Rushing	110.6	15	8
Passing	196.6	7	5
Scoring	18.3	4	3
Interceptions	18	T3	T1
Sacks	54	4	4
Opp. Pts./Play	0.316	8	5
TO Differential	+2	T12	T6

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Josh Allen	579	385	4,306	29	18

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
James Cook	237	1,122	4.7	2
Josh Allen	111	524	4.7	15
Latavius Murray	79	300	3.8	4

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Stefon Diggs	107	1,183	11.1	8
Dalton Kincaid	73	673	9.2	2
Gabe Davis	45	746	16.6	7
James Cook	44	445	10.1	4
Khalil Shakir	39	611	15.7	2
Dawson Knox	22	186	8.5	2

KICKING: Tyler Bass, 24-29 FGs, 49-50 PATs, 121 points
TACKLES: Terrel Bernard, 143; Jordan Poyer, 100
SACKS: Leonard Floyd, 10.5; Ed Oliver, 9.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Rasul Douglas, 4; Terrel Bernard, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

SCORING MACHINE Josh Allen was responsible for a league-high 44 touchdowns in 2023 and he became the first player in NFL history to have four straight 40-TD seasons. Both Allen and Jalen Hurts of the Eagles had 15 rushing TDs, which set a new NFL record for quarterbacks.

FOUR FOR FOUR The Bills have won at least 11 games in each of the last four years, which ties the franchise record set by the 1990-93 teams. The difference? Those Jim Kelly-Bruce Smith teams advanced to the Super Bowl all four seasons.

PICKING A FAVORITE Center **Connor McGovern** grew up in Central Pennsylvania and half his family were Steelers fans, the other half Eagles fans. When he was four years old, he split his head open and had to go to the hospital for stitches the night of Super Bowl XXXVI between the Patriots and Rams. While watching the game in the hospital, Connor proclaimed his favorite team would be the one that won the game. "That's how I became a Patriots fan," he said, though his fandom ended when he reached the NFL with the Cowboys.

LONG ROAD Cornerback Rasul Douglas had no college prospects after high school, so he attended Nassau Community College, a school with no dorms. He lived in an apartment eight miles away and took a bus to and from school for practice and classes, and with almost no money, his go-to eatery was McDonald's because of its dollar menu. He eventually earned a scholarship to West Virginia and became a third-round draft pick of the Eagles in 2017.

SERVICE AWARD Long snapper Reid Ferguson — whose brother is also a long snapper for the rival Miami Dolphins — is the longest-tenured Bill, having joined the team in 2016, the season before Sean McDermott became head coach. He has now played in 114 games, and with a full 2024 season, he will enter the top 30 on the team's all-time service list.

SCOUTING THE BILLS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP BUFFALO "Addition by subtraction with Stefon Diggs trade, as far as I'm concerned, and, basically, everyone that counts in Buffalo. I mean that to say, Sean McDermott, Josh Allen, even Terry Pegula. The guy is and always will be a diva. He's selfish. He's lost a half-step, and Josh froze him out in the second half of the season. … Love them picking Keon Coleman. It's a game-changer to have that big target to lob the football to. This kid has an infectious personality. Allen is going to have a lot of fun throwing to him. … I think their offense is good enough without Diggs. They run the football very well with James Cook. Especially behind Dion Dawkins. He's a tone-setter. … By committee, by Allen's ad-libbing, by Joe Brady's play-calling, they're going to get the job done on offense with those good tight ends, Dalton Kincaid and Dawson Knox. … Khalil Shakir is poised to make a big jump this season. ... Ed Oliver is kind of a big tease. He's a big-time talent, but he's never consistent and he's undersized. … Love the mentality and intelligence Matt Milano brings to the game. Tough, tough guy. For my money, Taron Johnson is the best pure nickelback in the league. … I think McDermott is a strong leader, but he's got to manage Allen a bit better as far as his decision-making. … One of the reasons that John Butler is out as secondary coach: He didn't want to play corner Kaiir Elam. I can't blame him. Elam just isn't very good. Plus, Butler got passed over as defensive coordinator when they upped Bobby Babich."

DENNY MEDLEY-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 BILLS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Allen, Josh	QB	6-5	237	6	Wyoming	D1a-18	D1a-Buf-18
6 Buechele, Shane	QB	6-0	210	1	SMU	FA-23	FA-KC-21
11 Trubisky, Mitch	QB	6-2	220	7	North Carolina	FA-Pit-24	D1-Chi-17
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
4 Cook, James	RB	5-11	190	2	Georgia	D2-22	D2-Buf-22
37 Evans, Darrynton	RB	5-10	203	4	App State	FA-24	D3-Ten-20
41 Gilliam, Reggie	FB	6-0	244	4	Toledo	FA-20	FA-Buf-20
26 Johnson, Ty	RB	5-10	210	4	Maryland	FA-23	D6-Det-19
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
81 Cephus, Quintez	WR	6-1	208	3	Wisconsin	FA-24	D5a-Det-20
14 Claypool, Chase	WR	6-4	238	4	Notre Dame	FA-Mia-24	D2-Pit-20
84 Davidson, Zach	TE	6-7	251	1	Central Missouri	FA-22	D5-Min-21
19 Hamler, KJ	WR	5-9	178	3	Penn State	FA-24	D2-Den-20
13 Hollins, Mack	WR	6-4	221	6	North Carolina	FA-Atl-24	D4-Phi-17
87 Isabella, Andy	WR	5-9	188	5	Massachusetts	FA-23	D2-Ari-19
86 Kincaid, Dalton	TE	6-3	246	1	Utah	D1-23	D1-Buf-23
88 Knox, Dawson	TE	6-4	254	5	Ole Miss	D3b-19	D3b-Buf-19
83 McKitty, Tre'	TE	6-4	246	3	Georgia	FA-23	D3-LAC-21
85 Morris, Quintin	TE	6-2	252	2	Bowling Green	FA-21	FA-Buf-21
1 Samuel, Curtis	WR	5-11	195	7	Ohio State	FA-Was-24	D2a-Car-17
10 Shakir, Khalil	WR	6-0	190	2	Boise State	D5-22	D5-Buf-22
80 Shavers, Tyrell	WR	6-4	211	1	San Diego State	FA-23	FA-Buf-23
18 Shorter, Justin	WR	6-4	229	1	Florida	D5-23	D5-Buf-23
89 Thompson, Bryan	WR	6-1	195	1	Arizona State	FA-23	FA-Buf-23
Valdez-Scantling, M.	WR	6-4	206	6	South Florida	FA-KC-24	D5-GB-18
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
70 Anderson, Alec	T	6-5	305	1	UCLA	FA-22	FA-Buf-22
79 Brown, Spencer	T	6-8	311	3	Northern Iowa	D3-21	D3-Buf-21
77 Clapp, Will	C/G	6-5	311	6	LSU	FA-LAC-24	D7-NO-18
71 Collins, La'el	T	6-4	314	8	LSU	FA-24	FA-Dal-15
73 Dawkins, Dion	T	6-5	320	7	Temple	D2b-17	D2b-Buf-17
72 Doyle, Tommy	T	6-8	320	3	Miami (OH)	D5-21	D5-Buf-21
76 Edwards, David	G	6-6	308	5	Wisconsin	FA-LAR-23	D5-LAR-19
75 Gouraige, Richard	T	6-5	306	1	Florida	FA-23	FA-Buf-23
63 Jarvis, Kevin	OL	6-6	325	1	Michigan State	FA-23	FA-Det-22
66 McGovern, Connor	G	6-5	318	5	Penn State	FA-Dal-23	D3-Dal-19
64 Torrence, O'Cyrus	G	6-5	330	1	Florida	D2-23	D2-Buf-23
74 Van Demark, Ryan	T	6-6	307	1	Connecticut	FA-22	FA-Ind-22
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
51 Ankou, Eli	DT	6-3	325	6	UCLA	FA-24	FA-Hou-17
96 Cline, Kameron	DE	6-4	275	1	South Dakota	W-Ind-23	FA-Ind-20
57 Epenesa, A.J.	DE	6-6	260	4	Iowa	D2-20	D2-Buf-20
98 Johnson, Austin	DT	6-4	314	8	Penn State	FA-LAC-24	D2b-Ten-16
59 Jonathan, Kingsley	DE	6-4	260	2	Syracuse	FA-22	FA-Buf-22
92 Jones, DaQuan	DT	6-4	320	10	Penn State	FA-Car-22	D4a-Ten-14
40 Miller, Von	DE	6-3	250	13	Texas A&M	FA-LAR-22	D1-Den-11
91 Oliver, Ed	DT	6-1	287	5	Houston	D1-19	D1-Buf-19
50 Rousseau, Greg	DE	6-6	266	3	Miami	D1-21	D1-Buf-21
94 Smoot, Dawuane	DE	6-3	275	7	Illinois	FA-Jac-24	D3-Jac-17
99 Toohill, Casey	DE	6-5	250	4	Stanford	FA-Was-24	D7-Phi-20
93 Williams, DeShawn	DT	6-1	292	5	Clemson	FA-Car-24	FA-Cin-15
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
43 Bernard, Terrel	LB	6-1	224	2	Baylor	D3-22	D3-Buf-22
45 Jones, Deion	LB	6-1	227	7	LSU	FA-Car-24	D2-Atl-16
58 Milano, Matt	LB	6-0	223	7	Boston College	D5a-17	D5a-Buf-17
52 Morrow, Nicholas	LB	6-0	225	6	Greenville	FA-Phi-24	FA-LV-17
54 Spector, Baylon	LB	6-0	233	2	Clemson	D7-22	D7-Buf-22
42 Williams, Dorian	LB	6-1	228	1	Tulane	D3-23	D3-Buf-23
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
47 Benford, Christian	CB	6-1	205	2	Villanova	D6b-22	D6b-Buf-22
32 Brown, Kyron	CB	6-1	195	2	Akron	FA-23	FA-NYJ-19
31 Douglas, Rasul	CB	6-2	209	7	West Virginia	T-GB-23	D3-Phi-17
21 Edwards, Mike	S	5-10	205	5	Kentucky	FA-KC-24	D3b-TB-19
5 Elam, Kaiir	CB	6-1	191	2	Florida	D1-22	D1-Buf-22
3 Hamlin, Damar	S	6-0	200	3	Pittsburgh	D6b-21	D6b-Buf-21
46 Ingram, Ja'Marcus	CB	6-2	190	1	Buffalo	FA-22	FA-Buf-22
7 Johnson, Taron	CB	5-11	192	6	Weber State	D4-18	D4-Buf-18
39 Lewis, Cam	DB	5-9	183	4	Buffalo	FA-19	FA-Buf-19
9 Rapp, Taylor	S	6-0	208	5	Washington	FA-LAR-23	D2-LAR-19
36 Williamson, Kendall	DB	6-0	203	1	Stanford	FA-24	D7b-Chi-23
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
2 Bass, Tyler	K	5-10	183	4	Georgia Southern	D6-20	D6-Buf-20
69 Ferguson, Reid	LS	6-2	235	7	LSU	FA-16	FA-Buf-16
15 Haack, Matt	P	6-0	205	6	Arizona State	FA-24	FA-Mia-17
8 Martin, Sam	P	6-1	211	11	App State	FA-22	D5-Det-13

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	1	Curtis Samuel	18	Justin Shorter
WR	0	Keon Coleman (R)		Marquez Valdes-Scantling
WR	10	Khalil Shakir	14	Chase Claypool
LT	73	Dion Dawkins	74	Ryan Van Demark
LG	76	David Edwards	70	Alec Anderson
C	66	Connor McGovern		S. Van Pran-Granger (R)
RG	64	O'Cyrus Torrence	63	Kevin Jarvis
RT	79	Spencer Brown	71	La'el Collins
TE	86	Dalton Kincaid	88	Dawson Knox
QB	17	Josh Allen	11	Mitchell Trubisky
RB	4	James Cook	26	Ty Johnson

DEFENSE

DE	50	Greg Rousseau	57	A.J. Epenesa
DT	91	Ed Oliver		DeWayne Carter (R)
DT	92	DaQuan Jones	98	Austin Johnson
DE	40	Von Miller	99	Casey Toohill
OLB	58	Matt Milano	42	Dorian Williams
MLB	43	Terrel Bernard	52	Nicholas Morrow
CB	31	Rasul Douglas	46	Ja'Marcus Ingram
CB	47	Christian Benford	5	Kaiir Elam
NB	7	Taron Johnson	39	Cam Lewis
S	9	Taylor Rapp	24	Cole Bishop (R)
S	21	Mike Edwards	3	Damar Hamlin

SPECIALISTS

K	2	Tyler Bass	KR	26	Ty Johnson
P	8	Sam Martin	PR	10	Khalil Shakir

24.9

Buffalo's offense had a Defense-adjusted Value over Average (DVOA) per FTN of 24.9 percent in Weeks 1-10 under Ken Dorsey, a third-place rank that was higher than in Weeks 11-17 under Joe Brady (14.1 percent, sixth).

BILLS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: C

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
2.	Keon Coleman	WR	6-4	215	Florida State
2.	Cole Bishop	S	6-2	207	Utah
3.	DeWayne Carter	DT	6-2	302	Duke
4.	Ray Davis	RB	5-8	220	Kentucky
5.	Sedrick Van Pran-Granger	C	6-4	310	Georgia
5.	Edefuan Ulofoshio	LB	6-1	239	Washington
5.	Javon Solomon	DE	6-1	247	Troy
6.	Tylan Grable	OT	6-5	309	UCF
6.	Daequan Hardy	CB	5-9	178	Penn State
7.	Travis Clayton	OT	6-7	301	England

GM Brandon Beane traded down twice and didn't make his first pick until No. 33, the first spot in the second round. There, he took Keon Coleman, who should see plenty of playing time when the Bills have three receivers on the field. Cole Bishop will apprentice behind starting safeties Taylor Rapp and Mike Edwards and perhaps get involved when the Bills utilize their three-safety dime defense. DeWayne Carter could be in the defensive tackle rotation. Ray Davis has a good chance to be the third running back on game day.

MIA DOLPHINS

AFC EAST FORECAST

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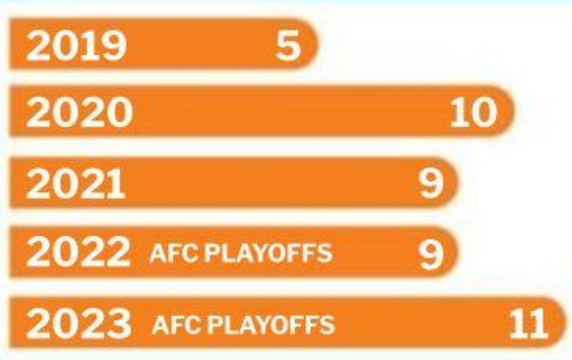
2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	Jacksonville	1:00
Sept. 12	Buffalo	8:15
Sept. 22	at Seattle	4:05
Sept. 30	Tennessee	7:30
Oct. 6	at New England	1:00
Oct. 13	BYE	
Oct. 20	at Indianapolis	1:00
Oct. 27	Arizona	1:00
Nov. 3	at Buffalo	1:00
Nov. 11	at L.A. Rams	8:15
Nov. 17	Las Vegas	1:00
Nov. 24	New England	1:00
Nov. 28	at Green Bay	8:20
Dec. 8	N.Y. Jets	1:00
Dec. 15	at Houston	1:00
Dec. 22	San Francisco	4:25
Dec. 29	at Cleveland	8:20
Jan. 4/5	at N.Y. Jets	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Mike McDaniel
Record With Team: 20-14
Career Record: 20-14
Offensive Coordinator: Frank Smith
Defensive Coordinator: Anthony Weaver
Special Teams Coordinator: Danny Crossman
Quarterbacks: Darrell Bevell
Running Backs: Eric Studesville
Wide Receivers: Wes Welker
Tight Ends: Jon Embree
Offensive Line: Butch Barry
Defensive Line: Austin Clark
Linebackers: Joe Barry
Outside Linebackers: Ryan Crow
Cornerbacks: Mathieu Araujo
Defensive Backs: Ryan Slowik

It's no longer enough for the Miami Dolphins to make wild-card playoff appearances and get sent home in the first round. After four straight winning seasons and two consecutive postseason berths, the Dolphins will need to earn their first playoff win since the 2000 season to be considered a success.

A good starting point would be to outlast the Buffalo Bills, who have won the AFC East four years running. Miami has been on the road as a wild card each of the past two postseasons, and the franchise's misfortune against the king of the division reached a boiling point when the Dolphins lost last year's regular-season finale at home to cap a blown three-game lead in the AFC East with five weeks remaining.

Head coach Mike McDaniel heads into his third season at the helm with plenty of continuity on the offensive side of his staff.

The Dolphins shook up the defensive staff, mutually parting ways with coordinator Vic Fangio, who went back home to Philadelphia. New defensive coordinator Anthony Weaver, who comes over from a successful stint as defensive line coach with the Ravens, will model Baltimore's defense as the framework for what he does. He also will bring more of an emphasis on player development, effective communication and a willingness to think outside the box with game plans.

OFFENSE

Quarterback Tua Tagovailoa has finally made it through a full season healthy while maintaining the level of play from his breakthrough 2022 campaign. Now, he benefits from a third consecutive season with the same head coach and play-caller (McDaniel), offensive coordinator (Frank Smith) and quarterbacks coach (Darrell Bevell).

Not a passer known for his arm strength, Tagovailoa threw the best deep balls of his career in leading the NFL with 4,624 passing yards last season.

That bodes well for star wide receiver Tyreek Hill, who led the league with 1,799 receiving yards, to build on that chemistry on throws over the top of defenses. Hill and Jaylen Waddle, entering his fourth season, can work on a combination of those deep passes, the intermediate connections when safeties give them excessive space out of respect for their speed and short patterns that allow them to run after the catch.

Those quick throws allowed Tagovailoa to avoid hits behind an offensive line that saw 12 different starting combinations in 2023. Five-time Pro Bowl left tackle Terron Armstead considered retirement in the offseason, and 2024 could be his last tour of duty. At right tackle, Austin Jackson, shedding a bust label, earned himself a contract extension during a strong 2023 protecting Tagovailoa's blindside.

The interior of the offensive line saw the loss of valued right guard Robert Hunt in free agency. The Dolphins added Aaron Brewer, who could play center or guard and has athleticism that fits McDaniel's propensity to run the outside-zone scheme in the run game.

And on the ground, McDaniel loves the speed at his disposal. The blazing duo of veteran Raheem Mostert and second-year back De'Von Achane returns with both always capable of breaking off the long run, while Mostert is also deceptively strong breaking tackles. To address the desire for a No. 3 wide receiver, the Dolphins signed Odell Beckham Jr., whose star has dimmed over the last few seasons. He hasn't had a 1,000-yard season since 2019 or been a Pro Bowler

since 2016, but he could prove to be an extraordinary complement when defenses key in on Hill and Waddle.

The backfield tandem benefits from the lead blocking of fullback Alec Ingold for one of the few teams that features the position. Durham Smythe earns his playing time for his blocking abilities as an in-line tight end, and Jonnu Smith was an offseason addition who gives Miami a red-zone target who can go up and catch passes while also producing yards after the catch on tight end screens.

JAY BIGGERSTAFF-USA TODAY SPORTS

DEFENSE

With Weaver, who could be on track for a head-coaching job in the future, as defensive coordinator, it was music to Dolphins fans ears when he called elite cornerback Jalen Ramsey the "ultimate chess piece" at his introductory press conference.

It frustrated followers of the team that Fangio largely kept Ramsey on one side of the field, often in zone coverage, instead of shadowing an opponent's top receiver. Weaver is likely to deploy Ramsey in a variety of ways to maximize his presence.

And as the Dolphins revamped the defensive coaching staff, including hiring former Packers coordinator Joe Barry as linebackers coach, they also had a bit of a reset with defensive personnel.

Defensive tackle Christian Wilkins fled to the Las Vegas Raiders for a lucrative free-agent deal, breaking up one of the league's top duos with Zach Sieler. It'll now be a rotation of other linemen around Sieler after Miami brought in a flurry of defensive tackles in free agency. Sieler, who brought an interior pass rush with his first 10-sack season in 2023, might see more double-teams moving forward. But Weaver's track record with defensive linemen can help develop the best rotation, which will be marked by competition among Benito Jones, Teair Tart, Jonathan Harris, Neville Gallimore and Da'Shawn Hand.

The big offseason question for the defense is how outside linebackers Bradley Chubb and Jaelan Phillips come back from their torn ACL and Achilles, respectively. It's one of the league's fiercest tandems if healthy, but the Dolphins also brought in veteran Shaquil Barrett and used a first-round pick on Penn State's Chop Robinson to shore up the depth on the edge.

Miami released two longtime defenders — cornerback Xavien Howard and inside linebacker Jerome Baker — for cap relief. Replacing them are Kendall Fuller at cornerback opposite Ramsey and tackling machine Jordyn Brooks at linebacker next to David Long Jr.

Veteran safety Jordan Poyer brings All-Pro talent and a leader to the back end of the defense along with talented fourth-year safety Jevon Holland. Poyer can also bring some of that Buffalo mentality to Miami in trying to flip the divisional rivalry in the Dolphins' direction.

SPECIALISTS

Kicker Jason Sanders will look to expand on his best season since 2020; he made 24-of-28 field goals and missed just one extra point in 2023.

Jake Bailey is the first Dolphins punter to return for a second consecutive season with the team since 2020. Consistency with the three specialists — Blake Ferguson is now in his fifth season as the long snapper — is something special teams coordinator Danny Crossman has been trying to find over the years.

Braxton Berrios is solid and secure as a punt returner. He is likely to be involved with kick returns, too, which could possibly see the unit get creative with either Hill, Achane or another of several speedsters back there with him, given the NFL's new kickoff rules.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Dolphins will now be judged by their playoff success with Hill 30 years old, Ramsey 29 and Armstead possibly in his last season.

Winning the division by overtaking the Bills and not letting the New York Jets surpass them will be key in order to start the postseason at home, avoiding potential frigid January temperatures away from the warm weather of Miami Gardens and Hard Rock Stadium. The Dolphins fell victim to the fourth-coldest game in NFL history last postseason in Kansas City, and that never bodes well for a team from South Florida.

MIA

2023 RESULTS (11-6)

Sept.	10	at L.A. Chargers	W	36-34
Spet.	17	at New England	W	24-17
Sept.	24	Denver	W	70-20
Oct.	1	at Buffalo	L	20-48
Oct.	8	N.Y. Giants	W	31-16
Oct.	15	Carolina	W	42-21
Oct.	22	at Philadelphia	L	17-31
Oct.	29	New England	W	31-17
Nov.	5	Kansas City	L	14-21
Nov.	19	Las Vegas	W	20-13
Nov.	24	at N.Y. Jets	W	34-13
Dec.	3	at Washington	W	45-15
Dec.	11	Tennessee	L	27-28
Dec.	17	New York Jets	W	30-0
Dec.	24	Dallas	W	22-20
Dec.	31	at Baltimore	L	19-56
Jan.	7	Buffalo	L	14-21
Postseason				
Jan.	13	at Kansas City	L	7-26

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	401.3	1	1
Rushing	135.8	6	2
Passing	265.5	1	1
Scoring	29.2	2	1
Third Down %	42.1	7	3
Points/Play	0.452	2	1

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	318.3	10	7
Rushing	97.1	7	3
Passing	221.2	15	8
Scoring	23.0	22	13
Interceptions	15	T14	T8
Sacks	56	3	3
Opp. Pts./Play	0.368	24	14
TO Differential	+2	T12	T6

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Tua Tagovailoa	560	388	4,624	29	14
Mike White	6	5	74	1	1

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Raheem Mostert	209	1,012	4.8	18
De'Von Achane	103	800	7.8	8

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Tyreek Hill	119	1,799	15.1	13
Jaylen Waddle	72	1,014	14.1	4
Durham Smythe	35	366	10.5	0
Braxton Berrios	27	238	8.8	1
De'Von Achane	27	197	7.3	3

KICKING: Jason Sanders, 24-28 FGs, 58-59 PATs, 130 points
TACKLES: David Long Jr., 110; DeShon Elliott, 82
SACKS: Bradley Chubb, 11.0; Zach Seiler, 10.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Jalen Ramsey, 3; Jerome Baker, 2; Brandon Jones, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

POWER MOVE Tua Tagovailoa, after bulking up in 2023, worked to slim back down ahead of 2024. It may help him develop quickness to extend plays in and out of the pocket. He also has worked with personal quarterback coach and former NFL quarterback John Beck on an adjusted throwing motion that involves more of a twitch from the hips. It could possibly provide extra power and zip on throws while keeping his mechanics consistent even when he gets hit as he throws.

ROADS CONVERGE Mike McDaniel spent only one season a decade ago in Cleveland as an assistant coach. Who knew that 2014 season with the Browns would establish the connection that got him his new defensive coordinator? As McDaniel was wide receivers coach with the 2014 Browns, Anthony Weaver was defensive line coach that year and the next. Weaver went to the Texans, got one year as defensive coordinator there in 2020 and then was Ravens defensive line coach the last three years to get back in the coordinator ranks.

RECORD-SETTING ROOKIE De'Von Achane's phenomenal rookie season saw him average 7.8 yards per carry last season, which set a Super Bowl-era record for any tailback with a minimum of 100 rushing attempts (he had 103).

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE Jordan Poyer's wife, Rachel Bush, and Braxton Berrios' girlfriend, Alix Earle, are popular social media influencers who, between the two of them, have nearly eight million followers on Instagram. The two couples have South Florida connections, too. Berrios and Earle are University of Miami alumni, and Poyer and Bush, a Florida Atlantic alum, already called South Florida their offseason home before Poyer's move from Buffalo.

INSIDE LOOK The Dolphins were featured on last year's "Hard Knocks," the HBO and NFL Films reality series that traditionally covers teams during training camp but, for the third year running, tracked a team during the season. McDaniel was revealed to curse much more than expected, and intimate moments involving injuries, like Phillips' torn Achilles at MetLife Stadium, were featured as fans got a sense of the team's characters among the roster and coaching staff.

SCOUTING THE DOLPHINS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP MIAMI "Tua Tagovailoa and Tyreek Hill were cooking last season. Their timing and chemistry are on point. Love the deep-ball strategy they're executing. … Mike McDaniel is a good kind of quirky. He's a lot more than cool shoes and watches and designer clothes. The guy is a true football savant. He draws up some truly innovative plays. It's smart guy play-calling and it's not easy to find in this copycat league. … You won't find a lot of running backs with a better nose for the end zone than Raheem Mostert. … Jaylen Waddle is as smooth as it gets as a route-runner. And it was an absolute no-brainer that they picked up his fifth-year option. … I'm liking the offensive line with Terron Armstead running it back for another year. His health, though, is getting iffier and iffier. The succession plan is in place. Patrick Paul is huge and can move. He's the future at left tackle. … Can't lie, it hurts them a lot that Christian Wilkins is now a Raider. … This comeback with Jaelan Phillips needs to work. … Jordan Poyer injects some serious toughness and savvy to the secondary, plus he knows this division like the back of his hand. It's a great tandem with him and Jevon Holland. … Jalen Ramsey is still Jalen Ramsey, most of the time. … The key to the defense and, probably, any legitimate playoff hope lies with the health of Phillips and Bradley Chubb. … Jordyn Brooks is small, but he's a thumper, and he can run."

JASEN VINLOVE-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 DOLPHINS VETERAN ROSTER

	QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
1	Tagovailoa, Tua	QB	6-1	227	4	Alabama	D1a-20	D1a-Mia-20
6	Thompson, Skylar	QB	6-2	219	2	Kansas State	D7b-22	D7b-Mia-22
14	White, Mike	QB	6-5	216	5	Western Kentucky	FA-NYJ-23	D5-Dal-18

	RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
28	Achane, De'Von	RB	5-9	188	1	Texas A&M	D3-23	D3-Mia-23
26	Ahmed, Salvon	RB	5-11	197	4	Washington	W-SF-20	FA-SF-20
35	Brooks, Chris	RB	6-1	223	1	BYU	FA-23	FA-Mia-23
30	Ingold, Alec	FB	6-1	232	5	Wisconsin	FA-LV-22	FA-LV-19
31	Mostert, Raheem	RB	5-10	205	9	Purdue	FA-SF-22	FA-Phi-15
23	Wilson Jr., Jeff	RB	6-0	210	6	North Texas	T-SF-22	FA-SF-18

	RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
	Beckham Jr., Odell	WR	5-11	200	9	LSU	FA-Bal- 24	D1-NYG-14
0	Berrios, Braxton	WR	5-9	185	6	Miami	FA-NYJ-23	D6b-NE-18
80	Conner, Tanner	TE	6-3	232	2	Idaho State	FA-22	FA-Mia-22
85	Cracraft, River	WR	6-0	198	5	Washington State	FA-22	FA-Den-17
18	Ezukanma, Erik	WR	6-2	206	2	Texas Tech	D4-22	D4-Mia-22
	Fortson, Jody	TE	6-4	226	3	Valdosta State	FA-KC-24	FA-KC-19
89	Hill, Julian	TE	6-4	251	1	Campbell	FA-23	FA-Mia-23
10	Hill, Tyreek	WR	5-10	191	8	West Alabama	T-KC-22	D5b-KC-16
86	Sanders, Braylon	WR	6-1	190	1	Ole Miss	FA-22	FA-Mia-22
84	Schwartz, Anthony	WR	6-0	186	3	Auburn	FA-23	D3-Cle-21
	Sexton, Mathew	WR	5-11	175	1	Eastern Michigan	FA-24	FA-Pit-21
	Smith, Jonnu	TE	6-3	248	7	FIU	FA-Atl-24	D3b-Ten-17
81	Smythe, Durham	TE	6-6	246	6	Notre Dame	D4a-18	D4a-Mia-18
17	Waddle, Jaylen	WR	5-10	185	3	Alabama	D1a-21	D1a-Mia-21

	OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
72	Armstead, Terron	T	6-5	305	11	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	FA-NO-22	D3a-NO-13
	Brewer, Aaron	G/C	6-1	295	4	Texas State	FA-Ten-24	FA-Ten-20
66	Cotton, Lester	OL	6-4	330	4	Alabama	FA-22	FA-LV-19
	Driscoll, Jack	T/G	6-5	312	4	Auburn	FA-Phi-24	D4b-Phi-20
74	Eichenberg, Liam	OL	6-6	306	3	Notre Dame	D2b-21	D2b-Mia-21
76	Hayes, Ryan	T	6-7	305	1	Michigan	D7-23	D7-Mia-23
63	Hines, Chasen	OL	6-3	320	2	LSU	FA-23	D6-NE-22
73	Jackson, Austin	OL	6-5	320	4	USC	D1b-20	D1b-Mia-20
65	Jones, Robert	OL	6-4	325	3	Middle Tennessee	FA-21	FA-Mia-21
70	Lamm, Kendall	T	6-5	308	8	App State	FA-22	FA-Hou-15
71	Smith, Kion	T	6-5	306	1	Fayetteville State	FA-21	FA-Atl-21
77	Wynn, Isaiah	OL	6-2	310	6	Georgia	FA-23	D1a-NE-18

	DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
	Gallimore, Neville	DT	6-2	315	4	Oklahoma	FA-Dal-24	D3-Dal-20
93	Hand, Da'Shawn	DT	6-3	297	6	Alabama	FA-23	D4-Det-18
	Harris, Jonathan	DL	6-5	295	4	Lindenwood	FA-Den-24	FA-Chi-19
	Jones, Benito	DL	6-1	335	3	Ole Miss	FA-Det-24	FA-Mia-20
	Mack, Isaiah	DT	6-1	311	4	Chattanooga	FA-24	FA-Ten-19
	Nixon, Daviyon	DT	6-3	305	2	Iowa	FA-24	D5-Car-21
96	Pili, Brandon	DT	6-3	319	1	USC	FA-23	FA-Mia-23
92	Sieler, Zach	DT	6-6	300	6	Ferris State	W-Bal-19	D7-Bal-18
	Tart, Teair	DT	6-3	290	4	FIU	FA-Hou-24	FA-Ten-20

	LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
	Barrett, Shaquil	LB	6-2	250	10	Colorado State	FA-TB-24	FA-Den-14
56	Bell, Quinton	LB	6-4	251	3	Prairie View A&M	FA-23	D7-LV-19
	Brooks, Jordyn	LB	6-0	240	4	Texas Tech	FA-Sea-24	D1-Sea-20
	Brown, Cam	LB	6-5	235	4	Penn State	FA-NYG-24	D6-NYG-20
2	Chubb, Bradley	LB	6-4	268	6	NC State	T-Den-22	D1-Den-18
53	Goode, Cameron	LB	6-3	245	1	California	D7a-22	D7a-Mia-22
42	Johnson, Alexander	LB	6-2	255	6	Tennessee	FA-23	FA-Den-18
51	Long Jr., David	LB	5-11	227	5	West Virginia	FA-Ten-23	D6-Ten-19
15	Phillips, Jaelan	LB	6-5	263	3	Miami	D1b-21	D1b-Mia-21
45	Riley, Duke	LB	6-1	227	7	LSU	FA-Phi-21	D3-Atl-17
41	Tindall, Channing	LB	6-2	236	2	Georgia	D3-22	D3-Mia-22
57	Vandenburgh, Zeke	LB	6-4	232	1	Illinois State	FA-23	FA-Mia-23
	Walker Jr., Anthony	LB	6-1	235	8	Northwestern	FA-Cle-24	D5-Ind-17

	DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
38	Bonner, Ethan	CB	6-1	186	1	Stanford	FA-23	FA-Mia-23
22	Campbell, Elijah	DB	5-11	200	4	Northern Iowa	W-NYJ-21	FA-Cle-18
	Fuller, Kendall	CB	5-11	198	8	Virginia Tech	FA-Was-24	D3-Was-16
8	Holland, Jevon	S	6-1	210	3	Oregon	D2a-21	D2a-Mia-21
4	Kohou, Kader	CB	5-10	193	2	TAMU-Commerce	FA-22	FA-Mia-22
	Neal, Siran	CB	6-0	206	6	Jacksonville State	FA-Buf-24	D5a-Buf-18
40	Needham, Nik	CB	6-1	196	5	UTEP	FA-19	FA-Mia-19
	Poyer, Jordan	S	6-0	191	11	Oregon State	FA-Buf-24	D7-Phi-13
5	Ramsey, Jalen	CB	6-1	208	8	Florida State	T-LAR-23	D1-Jac-16
24	Smith, Cam	CB	6-1	180	1	South Carolina	D2-23	D2-Mia-23

	SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16	Bailey, Jake	P	6-2	214	5	Stanford	FA-NE-23	D5b-NE-19
44	Ferguson, Blake	LS	6-3	240	4	LSU	D6-20	D6-Mia-20
7	Sanders, Jason	K	5-11	195	6	New Mexico	D7b-18	D7b-Mia-18

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	10	Tyreek Hill	0	Braxton Berrios
WR	17	Jaylen Waddle		Odell Beckham Jr.
LT	72	Terron Armstead	70	Kendall Lamm
LG	77	Isaiah Wynn	66	Lester Cotton
C		Aaron Brewer	74	Liam Eichenberg
RG	65	Robert Jones		Jack Driscoll
RT	73	Austin Jackson		Patrick Paul (R)
TE	81	Durham Smythe		Jonnu Smith
QB	1	Tua Tagovailoa	14	Mike White
RB	31	Raheem Mostert	28	De'Von Achane
FB	30	Alec Ingold	35	Chris Brooks

DEFENSE

DT	92	Zach Sieler	93	Da'Shawn Hand
NT		Benito Jones		Teair Tart
DT		Jonathan Harris		Neville Gallimore
OLB	15	Jaelan Phillips		Shaquil Barrett
ILB		Jordyn Brooks	45	Duke Riley
ILB	51	David Long Jr.		Anthony Walker Jr.
OLB	2	Bradley Chubb		Chop Robinson (R)
CB	5	Jalen Ramsey	4	Kader Kohou
CB		Kendall Fuller	24	Cam Smith
S	8	Jevon Holland	22	Elijah Campbell
S		Jordan Poyer		Patrick McMorris (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	7	Jason Sanders	KR 0	Braxton Berrios
P	16	Jake Bailey	PR 0	Braxton Berrios

2.36

Tua Tagovailoa's average time to throw of 2.36 seconds last year was the fastest among all qualifying quarterbacks in the NFL in 2023 per NFL Next Gen Stats.

DOLPHINS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Chop Robinson	LB	6-3	255	Penn State
2.	Patrick Paul	OT	6-7	333	Houston
4.	Jaylen Wright	RB	5-11	210	Tennessee
5.	Mohamed Kamara	Edge	6-1	252	Colorado State
6.	Malik Washington	WR	5-8	192	Virginia
6.	Patrick McMorris	S	6-0	210	California
7.	Tahj Washington	WR	5-10	177	USC

Chop Robinson could be needed for immediate impact if either Jaelan Phillips or Bradley Chubb is not ready in rehab to start the season or does not return as effective as before. Patrick Paul will be afforded the opportunity to learn behind tackles Terron Armstead and Austin Jackson and could be the left tackle of the future if Armstead retires. Jaylen Wright is a trademark Mike McDaniel pick with his speed and big-play ability. Hey, it worked well with De'Von Achane last year. Mohamed Kamara thought he was going earlier and comes in with a chip on his shoulder. The Washingtons could compete for slot receiver depth.

PATRIOTS

AFC EAST FORECAST **4**

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	at Cincinnati	1:00
Sept. 15	Seattle	1:00
Sept. 19	at N.Y. Jets	8:15
Sept 29	at San Francisco	4:05
Oct. 6	Miami	1:00
Oct. 13	Houston	1:00
Oct. 20	vs. Jacksonville*	9:30 a.m.
Oct. 27	N.Y. Jets	1:00
Nov. 3	at Tennessee	1:00
Nov. 10	at Chicago	1:00
Nov. 17	L.A. Rams	1:00
Nov. 24	at Miami	1:00
Dec. 1	Indianapolis	1:00
Dec. 8	BYE	
Dec. 15	at Arizona	4:25
Dec. 22	at Buffalo	1:00
Dec. 28	L.A. Chargers	TBD
Jan. 4/5	Buffalo	TBD

*Wembley Stadium, London

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Jerod Mayo
Record With Team: First season
Career Record: First season
Offensive Coordinator: Alex Van Pelt
Defensive Coordinator: DeMarcus Covington
Special Teams Coordinator: Jeremy Springer
Quarterbacks: T.C. McCartney
Running Backs: Taylor Embree
Wide Receivers: Tyler Hughes
Tight Ends: Bob Bicknell
Offensive Line: Scott Peters
Defensive Line: Jerry Montgomery
Inside Linebackers: Dont'a Hightower
Outside Linebackers: Drew Wilkins
Cornerbacks: Mike Pellegrino
Safeties: Brian Belichick

The 2024 season brings massive change to Foxborough. Bill Belichick is out after 24 years, replaced by two people — new head coach Jerod Mayo, and new general manager Eliot Wolf. Mac Jones was shipped out of town, replaced by the next young franchise quarterback — No. 3 draft pick Drake Maye.

There's already a new vibe inside Gillette Stadium. The old "Do your job" signs have come down. The word "collaboration" is the buzzword of the year. Wolf, 42, and Mayo, 38, bring youthful energy and new ideas. The mood is lighter. Work is more fun.

Of course, the Patriots are 0-0 right now. We'll see how fun it is coming to work if the Patriots start this season 2-8.

OFFENSE

With Belichick gone and offensive coordinator Bill O'Brien out after one year, the Patriots relied on Wolf's contacts to rebuild the coaching staff. He's implementing the old Packers offensive system in Foxborough, hiring two of Aaron Rodgers' old favorites to take charge — former Packers QB coach Alex Van Pelt is offensive coordinator, and former Packers offensive coordinator Ben McAdoo is a coaching assistant.

Van Pelt most recently was offensive coordinator for the Browns (2020-23), though he didn't call plays. It is believed he was relieved of his duties in Cleveland because his West Coast offensive system had a lot of plays with the quarterback under center, while Deshaun Watson prefers to operate out of the shotgun. So expect the Patriots' offense to operate with the quarterback under center, with a healthy dose of play-action.

The biggest change in personnel comes at quarterback. Jones is out, dumped to the Jaguars for a sixth-round pick. Bailey Zappe is still on the roster, but he may be squeezed out soon. Maye, the No. 3 overall pick, is the future. He's big, athletic and strong-armed, and he likes to compare himself to Josh Allen. As Belichick said during the draft, "We'll see about that." But eight-year veteran Jacoby Brissett is the present. Brissett, who was drafted by the Patriots in 2016 and has bounced between four other teams, will have the leg up to start in Week 1. Brissett started 11 games for the Browns in 2022 as he filled in for Watson during his suspension, and he developed a great relationship with Van Pelt. The Patriots would prefer to bring Maye along slowly, so it will be up to Brissett to fend him off during training camp. The Patriots also drafted Tennessee's Joe Milton III in the sixth round, giving them perhaps the two quarterbacks with the strongest arms in the draft.

Whether it's Brissett or Maye, the quarterback will be throwing to a group of receivers that can generously be called the most unproven in the NFL. The Patriots had better hope that either second-round pick Ja'Lynn Polk or fourth-round pick Javon Baker turns into a game-changer, because otherwise they have a bunch of No. 2 and 3 receivers. DeMario Douglas had a good rookie season, but he has durability issues. Kendrick Bourne is coming off a torn ACL and may start the season on the PUP list. JuJu Smith-Schuster looked cooked last season. Former second-round pick Tyquan Thornton will probably get cut. And tight end Hunter Henry is a good possession receiver but more of a sidekick. At least former Minnesota Vikings wideout K.J. Osborn may be a nice addition in the slot.

The Patriots could have some success on offense if they get consistent offensive line play and a solid run game to take the pressure off the quarterback. They return four starters on the line — everyone but left tackle Trent Brown — and

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have a nice 1-2 punch in the backfield with Rhamondre Stevenson and Antonio Gibson, who both can run between the tackles and catch the ball. The big question mark up front is at left tackle; Chukwuma Okorafor and rookie Caedan Wallace have almost all their experience on the right side and none on the left.

DEFENSE

The Patriots finished No. 15 in scoring defense (21.5 ppg) and No. 7 in total defense (301.6 ypg) last season, and those rankings probably would have been better if the offense hadn't been a total disaster. The theme for the Patriots' defense is continuity.

They lost a few contributors in the secondary in Myles Bryant, Jalen Mills and J.C. Jackson but otherwise are returning nine starters and 14 of the top 18 defenders. They're getting promising young cornerback Christian Gonzalez and star pass-rusher Matthew Judon back from season-ending injuries suffered early last year, and they have some budding stars in safety Kyle Dugger and defensive tackle Christian Barmore who are ready to break out.

And the coaching staff is largely the same. New defensive coordinator DeMarcus Covington was promoted after seven years as a position coach in Foxborough. And Mayo will still be heavily involved in the defense.

The Patriots have been a top-10 defense in four of the past five years, but don't assume that the success will continue in 2024. The big unknown is how the Patriots will respond without Belichick, one of the greatest defensive coaches in NFL history, playing the master puppeteer. And the Patriots didn't make many upgrades to the defense during the offseason, making only a couple of minor free-agency moves and mostly ignoring that side of the ball during the draft. If you're not getting better in today's NFL, you're getting worse.

SPECIALISTS

The Patriots have a few dynamic returners. Jalen Reagor, no lock to make the roster, had one of three kickoff return touchdowns across the NFL last season. Douglas was drafted in part because of his home-run potential as a punt returner. And Marcus Jones is a touchdown threat every time he touches the ball.

Punter Bryce Baringer has a big leg and is coming off a solid rookie season. But the Patriots need to bring in competition for kicker Chad Ryland, who was a disaster as a rookie, hitting just 16-of-25 field goals for a league-worst 64 percent success rate.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Patriots fans and the team's owners better keep expectations low and show some patience, because the team's new power trio has a massive rebuilding job ahead.

The Patriots are coming off a 4-13 season in which they tied for last in the league in scoring (13.9 points per game). They have the most unproven group of pass-catchers in the NFL. They didn't do much in free agency, opting for value over buzz. And they lack experience at all of the key positions. Mayo has only been an NFL coach for five seasons. Wolf has never been a GM before. Van Pelt has never been in charge of his own offense. Covington has never called plays before. Maye is just 21 years old, with a lot of work needed on his footwork and fundamentals.

Belichick's program grew stale after 24 years, and it was undoubtedly time to go. But the Patriots still might have one of the worst offenses in the NFL. And they are counting on a lot of inexperienced people to drag them out of the basement. It looks like it's going to take a few years.

2023 RESULTS (4-13)

Sept. 10	Philadelphia	L	20-25
Sept. 17	Miami	L	17-24
Sept. 24	at N.Y. Jets	W	15-10
Oct. 1	at Dallas	L	3-38
Oct. 8	New Orleans	L	0-34
Oct. 15	at Las Vegas	L	17-21
Oct. 22	Buffalo	W	29-25
Oct. 29	at Miami	L	17-31
Nov. 5	Washington	L	17-20
Nov. 12	Indianapolis	L	6-10
Nov. 26	at N.Y. Giants	L	7-10
Dec. 3	L.A. Chargers	L	0-6
Dec. 7	at Pittsburgh	W	21-18
Dec. 18	Kansas City	L	17-27
Dec. 24	at Denver	W	28-23
Dec. 31	at Buffalo	L	21-27
Jan. 7	N.Y. Jets	L	3-17

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	276.2	30	15
Rushing	95.7	26	14
Passing	180.5	28	14
Scoring	13.9	T31	16
Third Down %	30.2	31	15
Points/Play	0.231	31	16

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	301.6	7	5
Rushing	93.2	4	1
Passing	208.4	11	6
Scoring	21.5	15	9
Interceptions	10	T23	13
Sacks	36	27	16
Opp. Pts./Play	0.335	14	9
TO Differential	-11	T28	T15

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Mac Jones	345	224	2,120	10	12
Bailey Zappe	212	127	1,272	6	9

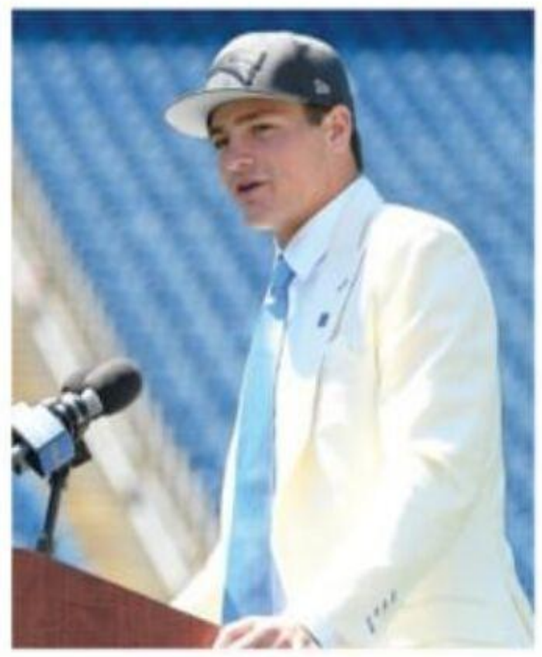
RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Ezekiel Elliott	184	642	3.5	3
Rha. Stevenson	156	619	4.0	4

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Ezekiel Elliott	51	313	6.1	2
Demario Douglas	49	561	11.4	0
Hunter Henry	42	419	10.0	6
Rha. Stevenson	38	238	6.3	0
Kendrick Bourne	37	406	11.0	4
DeVante Parker	33	394	11.9	0

KICKING: Chad Ryland, 16-25 FGs, 24-25 PATs, 72 points
TACKLES: Ja'Whaun Bentley, 114; Kyle Dugger, 78; Jahlani Tavai, 107
SACKS: Christian Barmore, 8.5; Ja'Whaun Bentley, 4.5; Deatrich Wise Jr., 4.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Kyle Dugger, 2; Jabrill Peppers, 2; Jahlani Tavai, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

ALL IN THE FAMILY New rookie quarterback **Drake Maye** is the youngest of four boys, and he comes from quite the athletic family. His father, Mark Maye, played quarterback at North Carolina in the 1980s. His oldest brother, Luke, played basketball at UNC and hit a buzzer-beater over Kentucky in 2017 to send the Tar Heels to the Final Four, eventually winning the national championship. Luke currently plays pro basketball in Japan and had it written into his contract that he could skip a game to attend the NFL Draft with his brother. Another brother, Cole, was a pitcher for the Florida Gators' national championship-winning baseball team in 2017. And his other brother, Beau, was a walk-on basketball player at UNC whose career was derailed by injuries.



QUITE THE JOURNEY Jacoby Brissett is back for his second stint in Foxborough, and he's had quite the career since the Patriots traded him at the end of training camp in 2017. He started 15 games for the Colts that year, thrust into the starting lineup two weeks after arriving in town due to an unexpected season-ending injury for Andrew Luck. Brissett found himself in a similar situation when Luck unexpectedly retired just before the start of the 2019 season. And Brissett has since become a wandering quarterback, starting five games for Miami in 2021 and 11 games for Cleveland in 2022 before playing sparingly for Washington last season. The Patriots in 2024 will be Brissett's fifth team in five years.

FLYING AROUND Cornerback Jonathan Jones, who ran 4.33 at his Combine, doesn't just fly around the Patriots' secondary. He got his pilot's license last spring and spends most of his downtime up in the skies, either by himself or with his wife and kids. "There's no security and no waiting in line. That's one of the best things, there's so much flexibility," says his wife, Andressa. "When you put everything together, you save four to five hours."

SCOUTING THE PATRIOTS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP NEW ENGLAND "Drake Maye has a lot of great tools, but he still needs to refine his fundamentals and mechanics. There are a few funky elements to his game, but I like the kid. Good attitude, big and tough, can run a little bit. He's got some Josh Allen in him. … Given where New England is post-Bill Belichick with Jerod Mayo and Eliot Wolf running the show, I think they can afford to give Maye some time and let Jacoby Brissett start for a while. … Rhamondre Stevenson is about 227 pounds of bad news. He runs with bad intentions, punishing linebackers. … Really, really like the Ja'Lynn Polk selection. To me, he was a first-round talent they were fortunate to draft in the second. He can go up and get it against any DB. … Kendrick Bourne, as long as he's patient, can make an impact this season. … Hunter Henry needs to produce a bit more after the catch and have a higher percentage of catches to targets. Six touchdowns are great, but they only got 29 first downs out of him. … The offensive line isn't special. … If the Patriots get a full season out of Matthew Judon, watch out. This guy is a menace. … Christian Barmore deserved that new deal. That was a smart move to get in front of that situation. … Christian Gonzalez has a smooth backpedal and breaks fast on the ball. … Kyle Dugger suits this defensive scheme to a tee. … The Patriots' kicking game needs some work. Chad Ryland doesn't inspire confidence, and neither does Joey Slye."

ERIC CANHA-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 PATRIOTS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
14 Brissett, Jacoby	QB	6-4	235	8	NC State	FA-Was-24	D3b-NE-16
4 Zappe, Bailey	QB	6-1	215	2	Western Kentucky	D4-22	D4-NE-22

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
21 Gibson, Antonio	RB	6-2	221	4	Memphis	FA-Was-24	D3-Was-20
36 Harris, Kevin	RB	5-10	225	2	South Carolina	D6-22	D6-NE-22
39 Hasty, JaMycal	RB	5-8	205	4	Baylor	W-Jac-23	FA-SF-20
38 Stevenson, Rhamondre	RB	6-0	227	3	Oklahoma	D4-21	D4-NE-21

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
86 Baker, Kawaan	WR	6-1	198	1	South Alabama	FA-24	D7-NO-21
84 Bourne, Kendrick	WR	6-1	205	7	Eastern Washington	FA-SF-21	FA-SF-17
80 Boutte, Kayshon	WR	6-0	197	1	LSU	D6a-23	D6a-NE-23
3 Douglas, DeMario	WR	5-8	192	1	Liberty	D6c-23	D6c-NE-23
85 Henry, Hunter	TE	6-5	258	8	Arkansas	FA-LAC-21	D2-LAC-16
81 Hooper, Austin	TE	6-4	254	8	Stanford	FA-LV-24	D3-Atl-16
82 Luther, T.J.	WR	5-11	189	1	Gardner-Webb	FA-23	FA-NYJ-23
2 Osborn, K.J.	WR	5-11	203	4	Miami	FA-Min-24	D5b-Min-20
46 Pettway, La'Michael	TE	6-2	223	1	Iowa State	FA-23	FA-Ind-23
83 Reagor, Jalen	WR	5-11	197	4	TCU	FA-23	D1-Phi-20
7 Smith-Schuster, JuJu	WR	6-1	215	7	USC	FA-KC-23	D2-Pit-17
11 Thornton, Tyquan	WR	6-2	185	2	Baylor	D2-22	D2-NE-22
87 Wilcox, Mitchell	TE	6-4	250	4	South Florida	FA-Cin-24	FA-Cin-20

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
76 Anderson, Calvin	OL	6-5	305	5	Texas	FA-Den-23	FA-NE-19
60 Andrews, David	C	6-3	300	9	Georgia	FA-15	FA-NE-15
67 Andrews, Jake	C	6-3	308	1	Troy	D4a-23	D4a-NE-23
74 Jordan, Michael	OL	6-6	315	5	Ohio State	FA-24	D4c-Cin-19
51 Leverett, Nick	OL	6-4	310	3	Rice	FA-TB-24	FA-TB-20
59 Lowe, Vederian	OL	6-6	320	2	Illinois	T-Min-23	D6a-Min-22
68 Mafi, Atonio	OL	6-3	330	1	UCLA	D5-23	D5-NE-23
77 Okorafor, Chukwuma	OL	6-6	320	6	Western Michigan	FA-Pit-24	D3b-Pit-18
71 Onwenu, Mike	OL	6-3	350	4	Michigan	D6a-20	D6a-NE-20
62 Sow, Sidy	OL	6-5	318	1	Eastern Michigan	D4c-23	D4c-NE-23
69 Strange, Cole	OL	6-5	310	2	Chattanooga	D1-22	D1-NE-22
64 Stueber, Andrew	OL	6-6	318	2	Michigan	D7-22	D7-NE-22
72 Wheatley Jr., Tyrone	OL	6-6	320	1	Stony Brook	T-Cle-23	FA-Chi-21

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
90 Barmore, Christian	DL	6-5	315	3	Alabama	D2-21	D2-NE-21
52 Bradley-King, William	DE	6-4	248	3	Baylor	FA-23	D7-Was-21
95 Ekuale, Daniel	DL	6-3	310	5	Washington State	FA-22	FA-Cle-18
92 Godchaux, Davon	DL	6-3	330	7	LSU	FA-Mia-21	D5b-Mia-17
97 Hill, Trysten	DL	6-3	310	5	UCF	FA-23	D2-Dal-19
70 Pharms Jr., Jeremiah	DL	6-3	300	1	Friends	FA-23	FA-NE-22
96 Roberts, Sam	DL	6-5	300	2	NW Missouri St.	D6b-22	D6b-NE-22
94 Watts, Armon	DL	6-5	307	5	Arkansas	FA-Pit-24	D6a-Min-19
99 White, Keion	DE	6-5	290	1	Georgia Tech	D2-23	D2-NE-23
91 Wise Jr., Deatrich	DL	6-6	280	7	Arkansas	D4-17	D4-NE-17

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
8 Bentley, Ja'Whaun	LB	6-2	250	6	Purdue	D5-18	D5-NE-18
53 Elliss, Christian	LB	6-3	231	2	Idaho	W-Phi-23	FA-Min-21
44 Giles-Harris, Joe	LB	6-2	234	3	Duke	FA-23	FA-Jac-19
33 Jennings, Anfernee	LB	6-3	255	4	Alabama	D3a-20	D3a-NE-20
9 Judon, Matthew	LB	6-3	270	8	Grand Valley State	FA-Bal-21	D5-Bal-16
30 Mapu, Marte	LB	6-3	230	1	Sacramento State	D3-23	D3-NE-23
50 McMillan, Raekwon	LB	6-2	250	7	Ohio State	FA-LV-21	D2-Mia-17
16 Takitaki, Sione	LB	6-1	238	5	BYU	FA-Cle-24	D3-Cle-19
48 Tavai, Jahlani	LB	6-2	255	5	Hawaii	FA-21	D2-Det-19
55 Uche, Josh	LB	6-3	240	4	Michigan	D2b-20	D2b-NE-20
Ximines, Oshane	OLB	6-4	254	4	Old Dominion	FA-24	D3-NYG-19

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
28 Austin, Alex	DB	6-1	191	1	Oregon State	FA-23	D7-Buf-23
24 Bledsoe, Joshuah	S	5-11	207	3	Missouri	D6-21	D6-NE-21
29 Bolden, Isaiah	CB	6-2	205	1	Jackson State	D7-23	D7-NE-23
23 Dugger, Kyle	S	6-2	222	4	Lenoir-Rhyne	D2a-20	D2a-NE-20
0 Gonzalez, Christian	CB	6-2	205	1	Oregon	D1-23	D1-NE-23
32 Hawkins, Jaylinn	S	6-1	208	4	California	FA-LAC-24	D4b-Atl-20
42 Hearn, Azizi	CB	6-1	204	1	UCLA	FA-23	FA-LV-23
31 Jones, Jonathan	DB	5-10	185	8	Auburn	FA-16	FA-NE-16
25 Jones, Marcus	DB	5-8	188	2	Houston	D3-22	D3-NE-22
5 Peppers, Jabrill	DB	5-11	217	7	Michigan	FA-NYG-22	D1b-Cle-17
41 Schooler, Brenden	DB	6-1	210	2	Texas	FA-22	FA-NE-22
26 Wade, Shaun	CB	6-1	195	3	Ohio State	T-Bal-21	D5-Bal-21
19 Wilson, Marco	CB	6-0	191	3	Florida	W-Ari-23	D4-Ari-21

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Baringer, Bryce	P	6-3	215	1	Michigan State	D6b-23	D6b-NE-23
49 Cardona, Joe	LS	6-3	245	9	Navy	D5-15	D5-NE-15
37 Ryland, Chad	K	6-0	195	1	Maryland	D4b-23	D4b-NE-23
Slye, Joey	K	5-11	213	5	Virginia Tech	FA-Jac-24	FA-NYG-19

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	1	Ja'Lynn Polk (R)		Javon Baker (R)
WR	3	DeMario Douglas	2	K.J. Osborn
WR	84	Kendrick Bourne	7	JuJu Smith-Schuster
LT	77	Chukwuma Okorafor	70	Caedan Wallace (R)
LG	69	Cole Strange		Layden Robinson (R)
C	60	David Andrews	67	Jake Andrews
RG	62	Sidy Sow	68	Atonio Mafi
RT	71	Mike Onwenu	72	Tyrone Wheatley Jr.
TE	85	Hunter Henry	81	Austin Hooper
QB	14	Jacoby Brissett	10	Drake Maye (R)
RB	38	Rhamondre Stevenson	21	Antonio Gibson

DEFENSE

DE	99	Keion White	91	Deatrich Wise Jr.
NT	92	Davon Godchaux	95	Daniel Ekuale
DT	90	Christian Barmore	94	Armon Watts
EDGE	9	Matthew Judon	33	Anfernee Jennings
LB	8	Ja'Whaun Bentley	16	Sione Takitaki
LB	48	Jahlani Tavai	30	Marte Mapu
CB	31	Jonathan Jones		Marcellas Dial (R)
CB	0	Christian Gonzalez	26	Shaun Wade
NB	25	Marcus Jones	28	Alex Austin
SS	23	Kyle Dugger	24	Joshuah Bledsoe
FS	5	Jabrill Peppers	32	Jaylinn Hawkins

SPECIALISTS

K	37	Chad Ryland	KR	25	Marcus Jones
P	17	Bryce Baringer	PR	3	DeMario Douglas

30.2

The Patriots converted just 30.2 percent of their third-down attempts, second worst in the NFL and the only time in Bill Belichick's Patriots career the team finished in the bottom two.

PATRIOTS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Drake Maye	QB	6-4	225	North Carolina
2.	Ja'Lynn Polk	WR	6-1	203	Washington
3.	Caedan Wallace	OT	6-5	314	Penn State
4.	Layden Robinson	OG	6-4	315	Texas A&M
4.	Javon Baker	WR	6-1	208	UCF
6.	Marcellas Dial	CB	6-0	190	South Carolina
6.	Joe Milton III	QB	6-5	235	Tennessee
7.	Jaheim Bell	TE	6-2	241	Florida State

The Patriots went heavy on offense, using their first three picks on a quarterback, receiver and a left tackle, then doubling back on each position later in the draft. Drake Maye is obviously the centerpiece of the draft class, but the Patriots really need Ja'Lynn Polk or Javon Baker to hit right away, and they need Caedan Wallace, a right tackle in college, to figure out how to play on the left side. Joe Milton III is an intriguing late-round flyer with a big frame and a huge arm. As for Maye, the Patriots can be patient with him as he sits behind Jacoby Brissett, but it won't be easy resisting the temptation to play him and generate excitement with the fans.

NY JETS

AFC EAST FORECAST

3

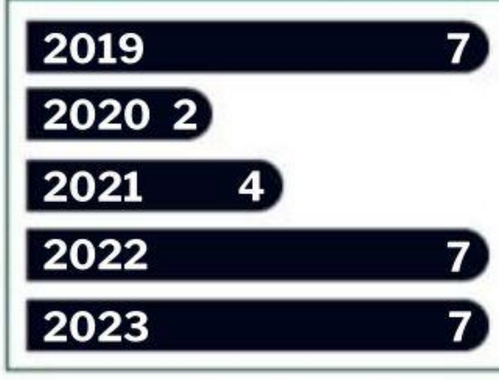
2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 9	at San Francisco	8:15
Sept. 15	at Tennessee	1:00
Sept. 19	New England	8:15
Sept. 29	Denver	1:00
Oct. 6	vs. Minnesota*	9:30 a.m.
Oct. 14	Buffalo	8:15
Oct. 20	at Pittsburgh	8:20
Oct. 27	at New England	1:00
Oct. 31	Houston	8:15
Nov. 10	at Arizona	4:25
Nov. 17	Indianapolis	8:20
Nov. 24	BYE	
Dec. 1	Seattle	1:00
Dec. 8	at Miami	1:00
Dec. 15	at Jacksonville	1:00
Dec. 22	L.A. Rams	1:00
Dec. 29	at Buffalo	1:00
Jan. 4/5	Miami	TBD

*Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, London

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Robert Saleh
Record With Team: 18-33
Career Record: 18-33
Offensive Coordinator: Nathaniel Hackett
Defensive Coordinator: Jeff Ulbrich
Special Teams Coordinator: Brant Boyer
Quarterbacks: Rob Calabrese
Running Backs: Taylor Embree
Wide Receivers: Zach Azzanni
Tight Ends: Ron Middleton
Offensive Line/Run Game Coordinator: Keith Carter
Passing Game Coordinator: Todd Downing
Defensive Line: Aaron Whitecotton
Linebackers: Mike Rutenberg
Senior Defensive Assistant/Cornerbacks: Tony Oden
Defensive Backs/Safeties: Marquand Manuel

It's time to deliver — or else. The 2024 Jets are the ultimate win-now team. So will they actually finally win?

If they don't, general manager Joe Douglas and head coach Robert Saleh could both be fired — which would cast doubt on aging quarterback Aaron Rodgers' future with the team.

For now, though, the Jets have pushed all their resources into winning in 2024 — a year after Rodgers' debut was cut short in Week 1 by a torn Achilles tendon. The Jets spiraled to a 7-10 finish — amid a ton of Zach Wilson drama (as usual). But Douglas and Saleh got a mulligan because of Rodgers' injury.

No more mulligans now.

Still, if Rodgers can stay healthy this season — and get the protection up front that he desperately needs — the Jets might just make the playoffs for the first time since 2010. Their 13-season playoff drought is tied for the longest current such drought in major North American professional sports (with the NHL's Buffalo Sabres).

The Jets once again had an excellent defense in 2023. Then they pushed hard to improve their sputtering offense this offseason, in order to build around Rodgers.

Maybe it all comes together in 2024. If it doesn't, Douglas and Saleh are likely done in New York.

OFFENSE

It will be fascinating to see how Rodgers fares in his return from that torn Achilles, after attempting a historic comeback late last season. The big question surrounding Rodgers this season: How mobile will he be? It's reasonable to assume that his arm will be strong and accurate. But his legs after that injury — at 40 years old, no less?

Bottom line: If he's not very mobile, protection — or lack thereof — could become an issue.

The Jets needed to upgrade at tackle, and they signed Tyron Smith to play on the left side and Morgan Moses to play on the right side. But they're both 33 years old and have dealt with injury issues recently.

That's why Douglas drafted a swing backup tackle, Olu Fashanu, at No. 11. Don't be surprised if Fashanu needs to start a few games this season, due to injuries. Fashanu might even wind up starting in place of Moses at some point, simply based on performance.

John Simpson should be an upgrade from Laken Tomlinson at left guard. Will right guard Alijah Vera-Tucker finally stay healthy, after playing five and seven games the past two seasons? If he does — and if the tackle situation remains stable — Rodgers' line has a chance to be pretty good.

The Jets made a win-now signing at wide receiver — former Charger Mike Williams, another guy with recent durability issues. Everybody knows that the Jets have an elite receiver in Garrett Wilson. But they need Williams and third-round rookie Malachi Corley to take pressure off Wilson, so defenses can't focus on double-teaming him. Corley first needs to beat out Xavier Gipson for the slot receiver job. Expect Corley to win that competition.

Beyond that — and Fashanu perhaps pushing Moses at right tackle — the other interesting battle to watch is at running back. No, Breece Hall won't lose his starting job after narrowly missing a 1,000-yard season. But the Jets' No. 2 back could be important at times. Will that guy be Israel Abanikanda or fourth-round rookie Braelon Allen?

JASEN VINLOVE-USA TODAY SPORTS

DEFENSE

The Jets, as usual, don't have nearly as many questions on defense. They finished last season first in Pro Football Focus' defensive ratings, after finishing second in 2022. They should be great again in 2024. Yes, they lost edge rusher Bryce Huff to the Eagles and had to trade another defensive end, John Franklin-Myers, to the Broncos, in order to free up salary cap space. But the Jets' front remains perhaps the NFL's best, led by Quinnen Williams on the interior and Haason Reddick (acquired via trade from the Eagles) on the edge. Given what Saleh's defense was able to get out of Huff and Franklin-Myers — who had 67 and 50 pressures last year, respectively, per PFF — expect Reddick to have a monster season.

Reddick and Jermaine Johnson (56 pressures last year) have a chance to form a dominant edge rusher duo. And few interior linemen pressure the quarterback better than Williams, who had a team-high 70 pressures in 2023.

The only question up front for the Jets: Is Will McDonald IV (last year's No. 15 overall pick) ready for a bigger role? He played only 184 defensive snaps last season. And even though he will be the No. 3 edge rusher — behind Johnson and Reddick — he will have a significant situational role with Huff gone.

The Jets' secondary appears to have a future Hall of Famer in Sauce Gardner, a first-team All-Pro selection in each of his first two seasons. Between Gardner and D.J. Reed, the Jets don't have really any questions at cornerback.

Yet safety could be a bit of a concern. At strong safety, the Jets will look to Chuck Clark or Ashtyn Davis, depending on which of those two emerges from training camp with the starting job. (Expect it to be Clark, though that situation could be fluid, at least early in the season.) Clark tore his ACL during spring practices last year. So while he surely will be ready for camp, the door is at least ajar for Davis, a fifth-year pro with 21 starts.

SPECIALISTS

The Jets' meager offense needed kicker Greg Zuerlein often last year. Only two kickers in the NFL attempted more field goals than his 38. He connected on 92.1 percent — tied for ninth among qualifiers. But the Jets hope they won't have to rely on him as much in 2024, now that Rodgers is back.

Ditto for punter Thomas Morstead, who was maybe the Jets' most consistent player last season. (It's never good when your punter has that distinction.) Morstead punted a league-high 99 times and averaged 48.8 yards per punt (10th).

Gipson figures to be the returner on both punts and kickoffs, but don't be surprised if Corley pushes for that role — which would boost the rookie's value. Gipson and Corley will see a lot of each other while battling for both the slot receiver and returner jobs.

FINAL ANALYSIS

At some point it all has to come together for the Jets, right? They can't just be a star-crossed franchise forever, right?

They haven't reached the Super Bowl since their lone appearance in the game — coming out of the 1968 season, when they shocked the world and won Super Bowl III.

More than half a century has passed since, with so much failure and drama — plus four losses in the AFC Championship Game (1982, '98, 2009, and '10 seasons). They went all-in with Rodgers — and all-in again this offseason — to try to end the pain.

And the pieces are absolutely there with this team, if Rodgers can return to elite form at this late stage of his Hall of Fame career. If he can, and if the Jets protect him, they might just make their long-suffering fans finally forget all that failure and drama.

2023 RESULTS (7-10)

Sept.	11	Buffalo (ot)	W	22-16
Sept.	17	at Dallas	L	10-30
Sept.	24	New England	L	10-15
Oct.	1	Kansas City	L	20-23
Oct.	8	at Denver	W	31-21
Oct.	15	Philadelphia	W	20-14
Oct.	29	at N.Y. Giants (ot)	W	13-10
Nov.	6	L.A. Chargers	L	6-27
Nov.	12	at Las Vegas	L	12-16
Nov.	19	at Buffalo	L	6-32
Nov.	24	Miami	L	13-34
Dec.	3	Atlanta	L	8-13
Dec.	10	Houston	W	30-6
Dec.	17	at Miami	L	0-30
Dec.	24	Washington	W	30-28
Dec.	28	at Cleveland	L	20-37
Jan.	7	at New England	W	17-3

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	268.6	31	16
Rushing	96.9	T22	T10
Passing	171.7	30	16
Scoring	15.8	29	15
Third Down %	26.0	32	16
Points/Play	0.255	29	15

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	292.3	3	3
Rushing	124.0	25	14
Passing	168.3	2	2
Scoring	20.9	12	7
Interceptions	17	T8	T4
Sacks	48	T8	T7
Opp. Pts./Play	0.327	9	6
TO Differential	-6	T23	T12

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Zach Wilson	221	368	2,271	8	7
Trevor Siemian	153	86	724	2	4
Tim Boyle	77	48	360	1	4
Aaron Rodgers	1	0	0	0	0

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Breece Hall	223	994	4.5	5
Dalvin Cook	67	214	3.2	0
Zach Wilson	36	211	5.9	0

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Garrett Wilson	95	1,042	11.0	3
Breece Hall	76	591	7.8	4
Tyler Conklin	61	621	10.2	0
Allen Lazard	23	311	13.5	1
Xavier Gipson	21	229	10.9	0

KICKING: Greg Zuerlein, 35-38 FGs, 15-16 PATs, 120 points
TACKLES: C.J. Mosley, 152; Quincy Williams, 139
SACKS: Bryce Huff, 10.0; Jermaine Johnson, 7.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Jordan Whitehead, 4; Tony Adams, 3; Ashtyn Davis, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

VICE PRESIDENT RODGERS? No, **Aaron Rodgers** won't be Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s running mate. But Kennedy is pals with Rodgers and did consider asking him to be his vice presidential candidate, for whatever that's worth, because that was never going to be a realistic option for Rodgers. Either way, don't be surprised if Rodgers — who is outspoken and controversial, to say the least — has some future in politics, once his playing days are over. And that could be rather soon, since he's 40 years old.

NORTH OF THE BORDER The Jets drafted cornerback Qwan'tez Stiggers in Round 5 — out of the CFL. Stiggers, 22, never played college football. After growing up in Atlanta, he was going to play at Division II Lane College in Tennessee but dropped out in 2020 after his father died as a result of a car accident. Stiggers played for the Fan Controlled Football league in 2022 and then with the CFL's Toronto Argonauts in 2023. He wound up being the league's Most Outstanding Rookie.

FAMILIAR FACE Offensive tackle Olu Fashanu — the Jets' first-round draft pick — didn't play football until he was a freshman in high school. He was a defensive lineman then. As a sophomore, he became a left tackle. To learn the position, he watched film of Tyron Smith. Now, Fashanu will be the primary backup for Smith and right tackle Morgan Moses — since both veterans have dealt with durability issues recently. "He is truly my football idol," Fashanu said of Smith. So Fashanu can't wait to learn from him.

HISTORICALLY YOUNG Don't expect fourth-round running back Braelon Allen to make a ton of history for the Jets in 2024 — since he will, at best, be Breece Hall's backup. But Allen could make one curious piece of Jets history. Allen doesn't turn 21 until next January. The Jets have never had a player appear in a game before his 21st birthday. Their record-holder for youngest player to appear in a game is wide receiver Deontay Burnett, who was 21 years and 17 days old when he made his NFL debut in 2018.

SCOUTING THE JETS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP NEW YORK "The pressure may hit a boiling point if they don't win this year. Woody Johnson's patience only goes so far, and Robert Saleh and Joe Douglas haven't delivered a winner. They're running it back with Aaron Rodgers, and there's no real reason to believe he'll make it through the season. The phrase 'wing and a prayer' comes to mind. … Love what Breece Hall did once he got back healthy, really elusive and powerful and smooth in everything he does. … This receiving tandem of Garrett Wilson and Mike Williams could be scary. Wilson is a textbook route-runner. Williams wins every jump ball. … Malachi Corley is an exciting rookie. … Finally, they get some decent offensive linemen in the building. Tyron Smith and Morgan Moses aren't long-term solutions to the problem Douglas keeps failing to address properly, but they should be able to keep Rodgers standing. … If Rodgers gets hurt again, at least they have Tyrod Taylor to step in. Zach Wilson was a disaster. … Lot to like about this defense. That's the saving grace of this team. The pass rush with Haason Reddick, Quinnen Williams, Jermaine Johnson and Will McDonald IV is incredibly disruptive. … C.J. Mosley quietly remains one of the best inside linebackers in the game. … What's left to say about Sauce Gardner? Truly elite corner. D.J. Reed is in his shadow, but he can flat-out play, too. … I don't like their safety situation much, but they seem to scheme their way through the lack of talent."

DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN

2024 JETS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
8 Rodgers, Aaron	QB	6-2	225	19	California	T-GB-23	D1-GB-05
2 Taylor, Tyrod	QB	6-1	217	13	Virginia Tech	FA-NYG-24	D6-Bal-11

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
25 Abanikanda, Israel	RB	5-10	216	1	Pittsburgh	D5-23	D5-NYJ-23
48 Bawden, Nick	FB	6-2	245	6	San Diego State	FA-21	D7-Det-18
33 Cook, Dalvin	RB	5-10	210	7	Florida State	FA-23	D2-Min-17
20 Hall, Breece	RB	5-11	217	2	Iowa State	D2-22	D2-NYJ-22
31 Patrick, Jacques	RB	6-2	234	1	Florida State	FA-23	FA-Cin-20
35 Valladay, Xazavian	RB	6-0	198	1	Arizona State	FA-23	FA-Hou-23

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16 Brownlee, Jason	WR	6-3	202	1	Southern Miss	FA-23	FA-NYJ-23
19 Charles, Irvin	WR	6-4	219	1	Indiana (PA)	FA-22	FA-NYJ-22
83 Conklin, Tyler	TE	6-3	248	6	Central Michigan	FA-Min-22	D5a-Min-18
82 Gipson, Xavier	WR	5-9	189	1	Stephen F. Austin	FA-23	FA-NYJ-23
81 Kuntz, Zack	TE	6-8	251	1	Old Dominion	D7-23	D7-NYJ-23
10 Lazard, Allen	WR	6-5	227	5	Iowa State	FA-GB-23	FA-Jac-18
85 McCutcheon, Lance	WR	6-3	202	1	Montana State	FA-23	FA-LAR-22
89 Ruckert, Jeremy	TE	6-5	250	2	Ohio State	D3-22	D3-NYJ-22
86 Taylor, Malik	WR	6-1	220	2	Ferris State	FA-22	FA-TB-19
18 Williams, Mike	WR	6-4	218	7	Clemson	FA-LAC-24	D1-LAC-17
5 Wilson, Garrett	WR	6-0	183	2	Ohio State	D1b-22	D1b-NYJ-22
88 Yeboah, Kenny	TE	6-4	250	3	Ole Miss	FA-21	FA-NYJ-21

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
70 Deculus, Austin	OL	6-5	321	2	LSU	W-Hou-23	D6-Hou-22
68 Eze, Obinna	OL	6-8	325	1	TCU	FA-23	FA-Det-22
63 Glaser, Chris	OL	6-4	306	1	Virginia	FA-23	FA-KC-22
50 Gurman, Vitaliy	OL	6-3	305	1	Toledo	FA-24	FA-KC-22
62 Hanson, Jacob	OL	6-4	303	1	Oregon	FA-23	D6-GB-20
61 Mitchell, Max	OL	6-6	307	2	Louisiana	D4a-22	D4a-NYJ-22
78 Moses, Morgan	T	6-6	320	10	Virginia	T-Bal-24	D3a-Was-14
65 Newman, Xavier	OL	6-2	297	2	Baylor	FA-23	FA-Ten-22
69 Saffold, Rodger	OL	6-5	325	13	Indiana	FA-23	D2-LAR-10
71 Schweitzer, Wes	C/G	6-4	300	8	San Jose State	FA-Was-23	D6-Atl-16
76 Simpson, John	G	6-4	330	4	Clemson	FA-Bal-24	D4-LV-20
77 Smith, Tyron	T	6-5	307	13	USC	FA-Dal-24	D1-Dal-11
66 Tippmann, Joe	OL	6-6	313	1	Wisconsin	D2-23	D2-NYJ-23
75 Vera-Tucker, Alijah	G	6-5	308	3	USC	D1b-21	D1b-NYJ-21
67 Warren, Carter	T	6-5	311	1	Pittsburgh	D4-23	D4-NYJ-23

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
72 Clemons, Micheal	DL	6-5	263	2	Texas A&M	D4b-22	D4b-NYJ-22
92 Fotu, Leki	DL	6-5	334	4	Utah	FA-Ari-24	D4a-Ari-20
98 Hector, Bruce	DL	6-2	296	3	South Florida	FA-23	FA-Phi-18
97 Holmes, Jalyn	DL	6-5	283	5	Ohio State	FA-23	D4-Min-18
11 Johnson, Jermaine	DE	6-5	254	2	Florida State	D1c-22	D1c-NYJ-22
93 Jones, Manny	DL	6-4	290	1	Colorado State	FA-23	FA-Ari-22
54 Kinlaw, Javon	DL	6-5	319	4	South Carolina	FA-SF-24	D1a-SF-20
99 McDonald IV, Will	DE	6-4	236	1	Iowa State	D1-23	D1-NYJ-23
7 Reddick, Haason	DE	6-1	240	7	Temple	T-Phi-24	D1-Ari-17
79 Smart, Tanzel	DL	6-1	295	5	Tulane	FA-20	D6-LAR-17
51 Spencer, Marquiss	DL	6-4	300	1	Mississippi State	FA-22	D7-Den-21
94 Thomas, Solomon	DL	6-3	295	7	Stanford	FA-LV-22	D1a-SF-17
95 Williams, Quinnen	DL	6-3	303	5	Alabama	D1-19	D1-NYJ-19

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
41 McCrary-Ball, Ma.	LB	6-0	214	1	Indiana	FA-23	FA-SF-22
57 Mosley, C.J.	LB	6-2	231	9	Alabama	FA-Bal-19	D1-Bal-14
44 Sherwood, Jamien	LB	6-2	216	3	Auburn	D5a-21	D5a-NYJ-21
55 Surratt, Chazz	LB	6-2	233	2	North Carolina	FA-22	D3-Min-21
56 Williams, Quincy	LB	5-11	230	5	Murray State	W-Jac-21	D3-Jac-19

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
22 Adams, Tony	S	5-11	203	2	Illinois	FA-22	FA-NYJ-22
29 Bernard-Converse, J.	DB	6-1	205	1	LSU	D6b-23	D6b-NYJ-23
30 Carter II, Michael	CB	5-10	184	3	Duke	D5b-21	D5b-NYJ-21
36 Clark, Chuck	S	6-0	209	7	Virginia Tech	T-Bal-23	D6-Bal-17
21 Davis, Ashtyn	S	6-1	202	4	California	D3a-20	D3a-NYJ-20
26 Echols, Brandin	CB	5-10	179	3	Kentucky	D6b-21	D6b-NYJ-21
1 Gardner, Sauce	CB	6-3	190	2	Cincinnati	D1a-22	D1a-NYJ-22
27 Hayes, Tae	CB	5-9	188	3	App State	FA-23	FA-Jac-19
23 Oliver, Isaiah	CB	6-0	202	6	Colorado	FA-SF-24	D2-Atl-18
4 Reed, D.J.	CB	5-9	188	6	Kansas State	FA-Sea-22	D5-SF-18

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
42 Hennessy, Thomas	LS	6-2	246	7	Duke	T-Ind-17	FA-Ind-17
6 Morstead, Thomas	P	6-4	225	14	SMU	FA-Mia-23	D5-NO-09
15 Siebert, Austin	K	5-9	200	3	Oklahoma	FA-23	D5-Cle-19
9 Zuerlein, Greg	K	6-0	195	12	Missouri Western	FA-Dal-22	D6-LAR-12

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	5	Garrett Wilson	16	Jason Brownlee
WR	18	Mike Williams	10	Allen Lazard
WR	17	Malachi Corley (R)	82	Xavier Gipson
LT	77	Tyron Smith	74	Olu Fashanu (R)
LG	76	John Simpson	65	Xavier Newman
C	66	Joe Tippmann	71	Wes Schweitzer
TE	83	Tyler Conklin	89	Jeremy Ruckert
RG	75	Alijah Vera-Tucker	61	Max Mitchell
RT	78	Morgan Moses	67	Carter Warren
QB	8	Aaron Rodgers	2	Tyrod Taylor
RB	20	Breece Hall		Braelon Allen (R)

DEFENSE

DE	11	Jermaine Johnson	99	Will McDonald IV
DT	54	Javon Kinlaw	94	Solomon Thomas
DT	95	Quinnen Williams	92	Leki Fotu
DE	7	Haason Reddick	72	Micheal Clemons
LB	56	Quincy Williams	44	Jamien Sherwood
LB	57	C.J. Mosley	55	Chazz Surratt
CB	1	Sauce Gardner	23	Isaiah Oliver
CB	4	D.J. Reed	26	Brandin Echols
NB	30	Michael Carter	37	Qwan'tez Stiggers (R)
SS	36	Chuck Clark	21	Ashtyn Davis
FS	22	Tony Adams	33	Jaylen Key (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	9	Greg Zuerlein	PR	82	Xavier Gipson
P	6	Thomas Morstead	KR	82	Xavier Gipson

32.4

The Jets converted just 12 of 37 red zone attempts into touchdowns (32.4 percent), the worst rate in the NFL. They finished 31st, with a 43.5 percent rate, in 2022.

JETS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Olu Fashanu	OT	6-6	312	Penn State
3.	Malachi Corley	WR	5-11	215	WKU
4.	Braelon Allen	RB	6-1	235	Wisconsin
5.	Jordan Travis	QB	6-1	200	Florida State
5.	Isaiah Davis	RB	6-1	220	South Dakota State
5.	Qwan'tez Stiggers	CB	6-0	197	Toronto Argonauts
7.	Jaylen Key	S	6-2	210	Alabama

No, Olu Fashanu isn't guaranteed to start immediately. But what are the odds veteran tackles Morgan Moses and Tyron Smith both make it through the season healthy? The Jets desperately need to keep Aaron Rodgers upright. That is their primary goal for 2024. Malachi Corley absolutely will be asked to contribute a lot immediately in order to take pressure off No. 1 target Garrett Wilson. Corley figures to be the Jets' Week 1 starting slot receiver. Braelon Allen could replace Israel Abanikanda as the No. 2 running back behind Breece Hall. Barring crazy developments with Rodgers and backup quarterback Tyrod Taylor, Jordan Travis won't play as a rookie. But he's an interesting piece for the future.

BAL RAVENS

AFC NORTH FORECAST

1

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 5	at Kansas City	8:20
Sept. 15	Las Vegas	1:00
Sept. 22	at Dallas	4:25
Sept. 29	Buffalo	8:20
Oct. 6	at Cincinnati	1:00
Oct. 13	Washington	1:00
Oct. 21	at Tampa Bay	8:15
Oct. 27	at Cleveland	1:00
Nov. 3	Denver	1:00
Nov. 7	Cincinnati	8:15
Nov. 17	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Nov. 25	at L.A. Chargers	8:15
Dec. 1	Philadelphia	4:25
Dec. 8	BYE	
Dec. 15	at N.Y. Giants	1:00
Dec. 21	Pittsburgh	4:30
Dec. 25	at Houston	4:30
Jan. 4/5	Cleveland	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: John Harbaugh
Record With Team: 160-99
Career Record: 160-99
Offensive Coordinator: Todd Monken
Defensive Coordinator: Zach Orr
Special Teams Coordinator: Chris Horton
Quarterbacks: Tee Martin
Running Backs: Willie Taggart
Tight Ends: George Godsey
Wide Receivers: Greg Lewis
Offensive Line: Joe D'Alessandris
Defensive Line: Dennis Johnson
Inside Linebackers: Mark DeLeone
Outside Linebackers: Chuck Smith
Pass Game Coordinator/Secondary: Chris Hewitt
Defensive Backs: Doug Mallory

Lamar Jackson vowed on the night he was drafted that he would take the Ravens to the Super Bowl, but that goal has proved as elusive as Jackson himself. Jackson and the Ravens fell a game short last season, and that's as close as they have come in Jackson's six NFL seasons.

Their quest to take the next step might fall even more squarely on Jackson after significant turnover hit the defensive side of the ball, especially the coaching staff. Any offense with a healthy Jackson, though, should be in Super Bowl contention, and All-Pro running back Derrick Henry has been added to one of the league's best running attacks. If games come down to the wire, the Ravens can trot out the most accurate kicker in NFL history.

OFFENSE

Although Jackson joked that he might throw for 6,000 yards in coordinator Todd Monken's offense, the Ravens' identity is still rooted in an old-school, ground-and-pound approach. That figures to continue with the addition of Henry, the team's biggest free-agent acquisition.

Henry led the league in carries in four of the past five years, and he turned 30 in January, but he insists he's got plenty left in the tank. To skeptics who might believe otherwise, he simply said, "Keep watching." In Tennessee, Henry primarily lined up deep in the backfield with his quarterback under center, while Jackson usually lines up in the shotgun or pistol, which caters to his singular running ability. One of the big tasks for Monken will be figuring out what alignment works best with this duo.

Road-grading fullback Patrick Ricard, a four-time Pro Bowl pick, is back to open holes for both. Fleet-footed running back Keaton Mitchell, whose promising rookie season was cut short by a torn ACL, could return for the second half of the season, and Justice Hill is an underrated third-down back.

The offensive line is one of the major question marks after losing three starters. Center Tyler Linderbaum, who made the Pro Bowl in his second NFL season last year, anchors the unit. Left tackle Ronnie Stanley also returns, but he has never quite regained his 2019 All-Pro form after a series of serious knee and ankle injuries. Both guard jobs are up for grabs. Ben Cleveland is a leading contender, and Andrew Vorhees, who sat out last year after he tore his ACL at the 2023 NFL Scouting Combine, is in the mix. Second-round draft pick Roger Rosengarten might start at right tackle. Super-sub Patrick Mekari, Daniel Faalele and Josh Jones are among the other options. The Ravens will spend training camp figuring out the best five up front.

The passing game once again should revolve around All-Pro tight end Mark Andrews, Jackson's favorite target since they joined the league together in 2018. With Andrews sidelined late last season, Isaiah Likely shined. Monken will find ways to get both tight ends on the field.

Top 2023 draft pick Zay Flowers highlights the receiver corps after a season in which he set a Ravens rookie record with 858 receiving yards. He is a crisp route-runner, and his elusiveness led to 391 yards after the catch, the most by a Ravens wide receiver since 2016. The Ravens are still hoping for that breakout from former first-round pick Rashod Bateman, whose best output is the 515 receiving yards he posted as a rookie in 2021.

DEFENSE

Not surprisingly, the Ravens' defensive staff was plundered during the offseason after they became the first defense in NFL history to lead the league in sacks

(60), average points allowed (16.5) and takeaways (31) in the same season. Coordinator Mike Macdonald was hired away as head coach of the Seattle Seahawks, and the Ravens have new position coaches at all three levels.

Overseeing the group will be 32-year-old rookie coordinator Zach Orr, promoted from inside linebackers coach. A former Pro Bowl linebacker with the Ravens whose career was cut short by injury, Orr is viewed as a rising star in the coaching profession.

Orr inherits 2023 Pro Bowlers at all three levels in defensive tackle Justin Madubuike, linebacker Roquan Smith and safety Kyle Hamilton.

Madubuike has blossomed into the interior pass rush force the team has coveted for years. He tied an NFL record with at least a half-sack in 11 straight games and was rewarded with a four-year, $98 million contract extension. Veteran nose tackle Michael Pierce returns as a run-stuffer inside.

The Ravens re-signed veteran Kyle Van Noy to lead the edge group, and the time is now for Odafe Oweh and David Ojabo. A former first-round pick, Oweh has totaled 13 sacks in three seasons. Ojabo tore his Achilles at Michigan's Pro Day in 2022, and injuries have followed him to the NFL. He has played in five of 34 regular-season games. Rookie third-round pick Adisa Isaac, Oweh's former teammate at Penn State, could be a sleeper.

In the middle of the Ravens' 3-4 scheme, Smith has the psyche and swagger that fits a franchise once headlined by Ray Lewis. Head coach John Harbaugh called the Ravens' 2022 deadline deal for Smith "one of the all-time great trades" in franchise history. Smith is vocal, emotional and durable, and his physicality runs sideline to sideline. Smith elevates the play of those around him, and this year that figures to be Trenton Simpson, who succeeds Patrick Queen as weakside linebacker.

The secondary features one of the more versatile players in the league in Hamilton. At 6-foot-4, he doesn't fit the mold of a traditional safety, but the Ravens don't use him like one, either. Hamilton can defend the deep ball, but he's just as likely to line up in the slot, fighting off a block to blow up a bubble screen or coming untouched on a blitz.

Pro Bowl cornerback Marlon Humphrey is the secondary's most established veteran, though he was slowed by injury last year. Brandon Stephens enjoyed a breakout 2023 season, and the Ravens added Clemson cornerback Nate Wiggins with their top draft pick.

Marcus Williams patrols the back end, but a shoulder problem slowed him last year. Secondary depth always seems to be a concern with this team, but when all are healthy, Humphrey, Stephens, Hamilton and Williams offer a good baseline.

SPECIALISTS

A special teams coach with the Eagles early in his NFL career, Harbaugh always emphasizes that part of the game. With a 90.2 percent success rate, Justin Tucker is the most accurate field-goal kicker in NFL history. Now in his third season, punter Jordan Stout has finally moved out of the shadow of franchise icon Sam Koch. Newcomer Deonte Harty might be first in line to succeed the departed Devin Duvernay as the top return specialist.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Jackson is 58-19 as a starter in his regular-season career, and as long as he stays healthy, the Ravens should contend for AFC supremacy again. Henry makes the run game even more potent, but a rebuilt offensive line holds the key to whether this offense can reach its potential. Defensively, Smith and Hamilton are foundational players who should make life easier for first-year coordinator Orr. For all his regular-season success, Jackson is 2-4 in the postseason, and the onus remains on the two-time league MVP to finally deliver on his Super Bowl promise.

COREY PERRINE/FLORIDA TIMES-UNION

BAL

2023 RESULTS (13-4)

Sept.	10	Houston	W	25-9
Sept.	17	at Cincinnati	W	27-24
Sept.	24	Indianapolis (ot)	L	19-22
Oct.	1	at Cleveland	W	28-3
Oct.	8	at Pittsburgh	L	10-17
Oct.	15	Tennessee	W	24-16
Oct.	22	Detroit	W	38-6
Oct.	29	at Arizona	W	31-24
Nov.	5	Seattle	W	37-3
Nov.	12	Cleveland	L	31-33
Nov.	16	Cincinnati	W	34-20
Nov.	26	L.A. Chargers	W	20-10
Dec.	10	L.A. Rams (ot)	W	37-31
Dec.	17	at Jacksonville	W	23-7
Dec.	25	at San Francisco	W	33-19
Dec.	31	Miami	W	56-19
Jan.	7	Pittsburgh	L	10-17
Postseason				
Jan.	20	Houston	W	34-10
Jan.	28	Kansas City	L	10-17

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	370.4	6	3
Rushing	156.5	1	1
Passing	213.8	21	10
Scoring	28.4	4	2
Third Down %	42.0	T8	4
Points/Play	0.439	4	2

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	301.4	6	4
Rushing	109.4	14	7
Passing	191.9	6	4
Scoring	16.5	1	1
Interceptions	18	T3	T1
Sacks	60	1	1
Opp. Pts./Play	0.250	1	1
TO Differential	+12	T1	1

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Lamar Jackson	457	307	3,678	24	7
Tyler Huntley	37	21	203	3	0

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Lamar Jackson	148	821	5.5	5
Gus Edwards	198	810	4.1	13
Keaton Mitchell	47	396	8.4	2
Justice Hill	84	387	4.6	3

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Zay Flowers	77	858	11.1	5
Mark Andrews	45	544	12.1	6
Odell Beckham Jr.	35	565	16.1	3
Nelson Agholor	35	381	10.9	4
Rashod Bateman	32	367	11.5	1

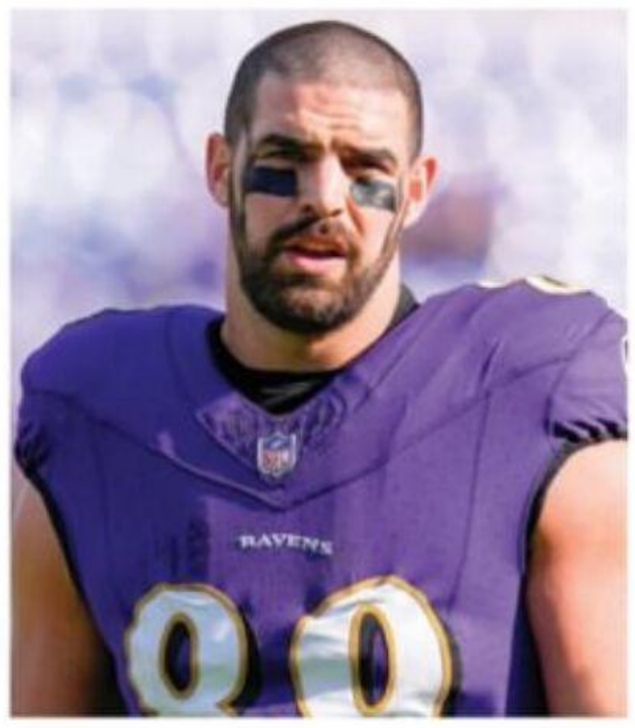
KICKING: Justin Tucker, 32-37 FGs, 51-52 PATs, 147 points
TACKLES: Roquan Smith, 158; Patrick Queen, 133
SACKS: Justin Madubuike, 13.0; Jadeveon Clowney, 9.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Geno Stone, 7; Kyle Hamilton, 4

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

BROTHERLY LOVE When the Ravens face the Los Angeles Chargers this year, brothers John and Jim Harbaugh will meet for the third time as opposing NFL head coaches. John Harbaugh has gotten the best of his older brother in both previous meetings. The Ravens beat Jim Harbaugh's San Francisco 49ers, 16-6, on Thanksgiving in 2011 and then 34-31 in Super Bowl XLVII the following season.

LATE BLOOMER Massive offensive tackle Daniel Faalele (6-8, 380) grew up in Melbourne, Australia, where he played basketball and rugby. He had never played football before age 16, when he moved to Florida's IMG Academy and learned the sport. The scholarship offers soon started pouring in. He ultimately played at the University of Minnesota, where his roommate was a current Ravens teammate, wide receiver Rashod Bateman.

DIABETIC INSPIRATION Tight end **Mark Andrews** is a type-1 diabetic who wears a continuous glucose monitor during games, and the data can be accessed at all times by the Ravens training staff. Andrews frequently meets with type-1 diabetic children wherever the Ravens play.



HUMPHREY ON TRACK If he didn't focus on football, cornerback Marlon Humphrey might have been an Olympian in track and field. As a teenager, Humphrey placed second in the 110-meter high hurdles at the World Youth Championships in Ukraine. The only person to beat him was future Jamaican Olympian Jaheel Hyde.

SCOUTING THE RAVENS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP BALTIMORE "For an MVP quarterback, Lamar Jackson still has some limitations as a passer. He was extremely disappointing in the postseason, which is a recurring theme for him. He's still one of the best dual-threat quarterbacks to ever play in the NFL, but this is a passing league. You wish he was more accurate and more sound fundamentally. … This is a juggernaut backfield now with the addition of powerhouse runner Derrick Henry. No one likes tackling that guy. … Keaton Mitchell has speed to burn when he's 100 percent. Justice Hill just finds a way. … Zay Flowers had some special moments as a rookie last season. He's got a lot of ability to run after the catch and sell his routes. … Not a big fan of them extending Rashod Bateman, but he wasn't expensive. … Mark Andrews and Jackson have a special connection. Andrews' toughness and body control are both underrated qualities. … Ronnie Stanley hasn't lived up to his contract, at all. … Tyler Linderbaum is an animal at center. The guy mauls people at the line of scrimmage. He is tough, tough, tough. … This isn't a special offensive line overall. … Investing big money in Justin Madubuike was a shrewd decision by Eric DeCosta. He's one of the better GMs around. … Watch the run defense not miss a beat without Patrick Queen. Roquan Smith will respond by just making more tackles. No one blocks that guy, and Trenton Simpson is a nice complementary presence next to him. … Kyle Van Noy needs to duplicate that big season. … Kyle Hamilton is an outstanding safety: tall, rangy, smart, instinctive and he tackles. … Marlon Humphrey doesn't typically back up his words. … Marcus Williams should stabilize the back of the secondary. … There is no kicker more talented than Justin Tucker."

JESSICA RAPFOGEL-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 RAVENS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
12 Cunningham, Malik	QB	6-1	198	1	Louisville	FA-23	FA-NE-23
8 Jackson, Lamar	QB	6-2	215	6	Louisville	D1b-18	D1b-Bal-18
17 Johnson, Josh	QB	6-3	214	9	San Diego	FA-23	D5-TB-08

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
43 Hill, Justice	RB	5-10	197	5	Oklahoma State	D4a-19	D4a-Bal-19
22 Henry, Derrick	RB	6-3	247	8	Alabama	FA-Ten-24	D2c-Ten-16
34 Mitchell, Keaton	RB	5-8	191	1	East Carolina	FA-23	FA-Bal-23
42 Ricard, Patrick	FB	6-3	305	7	Maine	FA-17	FA-Bal-17
36 Wright, Owen	RB	5-9	217	1	Monmouth	FA-23	FA-Bal-23

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
15 Agholor, Nelson	WR	6-0	200	9	USC	FA-NE-23	D1-Phi-15
89 Andrews, Mark	TE	6-5	247	6	Oklahoma	D3b-18	D3b-Bal-18
7 Bateman, Rashod	WR	6-1	197	3	Minnesota	D1a-21	D1a-Bal-21
4 Flowers, Zay	WR	5-9	182	1	Boston College	D1-23	D1-Bal-23
3 Harty, Deonte	WR	5-6	170	5	Assumption	FA-Buf-24	FA-NO-19
88 Kolar, Charlie	TE	6-6	257	2	Iowa State	D4c-22	D4c-Bal-22
80 Likely, Isaiah	TE	6-4	241	2	Coastal Carolina	D4e-22	D4e-Bal-22
82 Ryan, Sean	WR	6-3	200	1	Rutgers	FA-23	FA-Bal-23
16 Wallace, Tylan	WR	5-11	198	3	Oklahoma State	D4-21	D4-Bal-21
85 Washington, Scotty	TE	6-5	245	1	Wake Forest	FA-23	FA-Cin-20

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
71 Aumavae-Laulu, M.	G/T	6-5	325	1	Oregon	D6-23	D6-Bal-23
66 Cleveland, Ben	G	6-6	370	3	Georgia	D3a-21	D3a-Bal-21
63 Doss, TyKeem	G	6-5	380	1	Southern Miss	FA-23	FA-Bal-23
77 Faalele, Daniel	T	6-8	380	2	Minnesota	D4a-22	D4a-Bal-22
74 Jones, Josh	T	6-7	310	4	Houston	FA-Hou-24	D3-Ari-20
64 Linderbaum, Tyler	C	6-2	305	2	Iowa	D1b-22	D1b-Bal-22
62 Manning, Tashawn	G	6-3	340	1	Kentucky	FA-23	FA-Bal-23
65 Mekari, Patrick	OL	6-4	305	5	California	FA-19	FA-Bal-19
79 Stanley, Ronnie	T	6-6	315	8	Notre Dame	D1-16	D1-Bal-16
72 Vorhees, Andrew	G	6-6	310	1	USC	D7-23	D7-Bal-23

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
98 Jones, Travis	DT	6-4	338	2	Connecticut	D3-22	D3-Bal-22
92 Madubuike, Justin	DT	6-3	305	4	Texas A&M	D3a-20	D3a-Bal-20
91 Nichols, Rayshad	DT	6-2	305	1	Stephen F. Austin	FA-22	FA-Bal-22
58 Pierce, Michael	NT	6-0	355	7	Samford	FA-22	FA-Bal-16
93 Roy, Bravvion	DT	6-1	330	4	Baylor	FA-23	D6-Car-20
97 Urban, Brent	DE	6-7	309	10	Virginia	FA-Chi-22	D4-Bal-14
96 Washington, Broderick	DT	6-2	315	4	Texas Tech	D5-20	D5-Bal-20

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
49 Board, Chris	LB	6-2	244	6	North Dakota St.	FA-NE-24	FA-Bal-18
59 Hamm, Malik	OLB	6-3	250	1	Lafayette	FA-23	FA-Bal-23
40 Harrison, Malik	LB	6-3	259	4	Ohio State	D3c-20	D3c-Bal-20
90 Ojabo, David	OLB	6-4	265	2	Michigan	D2-22	D2-Bal-22
99 Oweh, Odafe	OLB	6-5	257	3	Penn State	D1b-21	D1b-Bal-21
95 Robinson, Tavius	OLB	6-6	258	1	Ole Miss	D4-23	D4-Bal-23
51 Ross, Josh	ILB	6-0	229	2	Michigan	FA-22	FA-Bal-22
30 Simpson, Trenton	ILB	6-2	238	1	Clemson	D3-23	D3-Bal-23
0 Smith, Roquan	ILB	6-1	236	6	Georgia	T-Chi-22	D1-Chi-18
53 Van Noy, Kyle	OLB	6-3	250	10	BYU	FA-23	D2-Det-14

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5 Armour-Davis, Jalyn	CB	6-1	197	2	Alabama	D4b-22	D4b-Bal-22
14 Hamilton, Kyle	S	6-4	220	2	Notre Dame	D1a-22	D1a-Bal-22
25 Hollman, Ka'dar	CB	6-0	196	3	Toledo	FA-Hou-24	D6-GB-19
44 Humphrey, Marlon	CB	6-0	201	7	Alabama	D1-17	D1-Bal-17
45 Matthew, Christian	DB	6-2	195	2	Valdosta State	FA-24	D7-Ari-22
10 Maulet, Arthur	CB	5-10	190	7	Memphis	FA-23	FA-NO-17
25 Seymour, Kevon	CB	6-0	188	6	USC	FA-21	D6-Buf-16
21 Stephens, Brandon	DB	6-1	215	3	SMU	D3b-21	D3b-Bal-21
39 Swilling, Tre	CB	6-1	196	1	Georgia Tech	FA-23	FA-Ten-22
29 Washington, Ar'Darius	S	5-8	177	2	TCU	FA-21	FA-Bal-21
22 Williams, Damarion	CB	5-10	180	2	Houston	D4f-22	D4f-Bal-22
32 Williams, Marcus	S	6-1	207	7	Utah	FA-NO-22	D2-NO-17

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
46 Moore, Nick	LS	6-2	260	3	Georgia	FA-20	FA-NO-19
11 Stout, Jordan	P	6-3	207	2	Penn State	D4d-22	D4d-Bal-22
9 Tucker, Justin	K	6-1	188	12	Texas	FA-12	FA-Bal-12

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	4	Zay Flowers	16	Tylan Wallace
WR	7	Rashod Bateman	81	Devontez Walker (R)
WR	15	Nelson Agholor	3	Deonte Harty
LT	79	Ronnie Stanley	65	Patrick Mekari
LG	72	Andrew Vorhees	74	Josh Jones
C	64	Tyler Linderbaum	61	Nick Samac (R)
RG	66	Ben Cleveland	71	Mal. Aumavae-Laulu
RT	70	Roger Rosengarten (R)	77	Daniel Faalele
TE	89	Mark Andrews	80	Isaiah Likely
QB	8	Lamar Jackson	17	Josh Johnson
RB	22	Derrick Henry	43	Justice Hill

DEFENSE

DE	92	Justin Madubuike	97	Brent Urban
NT	58	Michael Pierce	98	Travis Jones
DT	96	Broderick Washington	91	Rayshad Nichols
OLB	53	Kyle Van Noy	50	Adisa Isaac (R)
ILB	30	Trenton Simpson	40	Malik Harrison
ILB	0	Roquan Smith	49	Chris Board
OLB	99	Odafe Oweh	90	David Ojabo
CB	21	Brandon Stephens	2	Nate Wiggins (R)
CB	44	Marlon Humphrey	10	Arthur Maulet
SS	14	Kyle Hamilton	29	Ar'Darius Washington
FS	32	Marcus Williams	28	Sanoussi Kane (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	9	Justin Tucker	KR	43	Justice Hill
P	11	Jordan Stout	PR	3	Deonte Harty

244.7

The snap-weighted average weight of Baltimore's defense in 2023 was 244.7 — the highest in the NFL per FTN Fantasy.

RAVENS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1	Nate Wiggins	CB	6-1	182	Clemson
2	Roger Rosengarten	OT	6-5	310	Washington
3	Adisa Isaac	OLB	6-4	253	Penn State
4	Devontez Walker	WR	6-1	191	North Carolina
4	T.J. Tampa	CB	6-1	194	Iowa State
5	Rasheen Ali	RB	5-11	197	Marshall
6	Devin Leary	QB	6-1	216	Kentucky
7	Nick Samac	C	6-4	307	Michigan State
7	Sanoussi Kane	S	5-11	207	Purdue

The Ravens attacked major positions of need with their first three picks. General manager Eric DeCosta called Nate Wiggins "the best cover corner in the draft," and Roger Rosengarten might be the Week 1 starter at right tackle. Adisa Isaac adds another proven edge rusher to a team that lost Jadeveon Clowney, and both he and cornerback T.J. Tampa bolster areas where depth has been a consistent issue. Rasheen Ali has upside for a team that loves to run, and the Ravens hope that safety Sanoussi Kane can follow the same trajectory as Geno Stone, a seventh-rounder who gradually developed into a starter. The Ravens, though, drafted no guards despite losing both starters to free agency.

BENGALS

AFC NORTH FORECAST

2

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept 8	New England	1:00
Sept. 15	at Kansas City	4:25
Sept. 23	Washington	8:15
Sept. 29	at Carolina	1:00
Oct. 6	Baltimore	1:00
Oct. 13	at N.Y. Giants	8:20
Oct. 20	at Cleveland	1:00
Oct. 27	Philadelphia	4:25
Nov. 3	Las Vegas	1:00
Nov. 7	at Baltimore	8:15
Nov. 17	at L.A. Chargers	4:25
Nov. 24	BYE	
Dec. 1	Pittsburgh	1:00
Dec. 9	at Dallas	8:15
Dec. 15	at Tennessee	1:00
Dec. 19	Cleveland	8:15
Dec. 28	Denver	TBD
Jan. 4/5	at Pittsburgh	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Zac Taylor
Record With Team: 37-44-1
Career Record: 37-44-1
Offensive Coordinator: Dan Pitcher
Defensive Coordinator: Lou Anarumo
Special Teams Coordinator/Assistant Head Coach: Darrin Simmons
Quarterbacks: Brad Kragthorpe
Running Backs: Justin Hill
Wide Receivers: Troy Walters
Tight Ends: James Casey
Offensive Line/Run Game Coordinator: Frank Pollack
Defensive Line: Marion Hobby
Linebackers: James Bettcher
Secondary/Cornerbacks: Charles Burks
Secondary/Safeties: Jordan Kovacs

Things are a little more complicated for the Bengals these days, but it's ultimately worth it to have a quarterback as talented as Joe Burrow and a deep enough roster to enter each season with a true belief that returning to the Super Bowl is achievable.

Burrow, entering his fifth season, is on a big-boy contract now, and that's made for some hard and awkward decisions across Cincinnati's roster. Still, there are more than enough reasons to believe the Bengals' 9-8, last-place finish in 2023 was a one-off — the byproduct of Burrow going down with a season-ending injury in a year when he never seemed fully healthy.

With a healthy Burrow, everything comes easier — even if it means dealing with some uncomfortable conversations along the way — and the Bengals are excited to relish in that feeling once again as they look to return to the playoffs for the third time in the last four years.

OFFENSE

Burrow means absolutely everything to the Bengals, so simply getting him back at full strength and completely healthy is a big reason why Cincinnati can and will bounce back. The Pro Bowl quarterback has dealt with significant knee, calf and wrist injuries over his four seasons, and his past two training camps have been marred by maladies that kept him off the field for extended amounts of time — appendix in 2022 and calf in 2023 — and ultimately played a part in some sluggish starts. His most recent injury, a torn ligament in his right wrist, derailed his 2023 campaign, keeping him off the field for the final six games, but isn't expected to affect his prep for 2024. Burrow's swagger and charisma permeate through the entire group, and if the Bengals have a healthy Burrow under center, their ceiling is limitless.

Protecting Burrow is Job 1. Since his rookie season, when he was under constant duress from opposing defensive lines, the Bengals have made steady improvements up front, and they once again devoted more valuable resources to the offensive line for 2024. With Jonah Williams off to Arizona, the Bengals doubled down at right tackle, first signing veteran Trent Brown and then adding the massive Amarius Mims in the first round of the NFL Draft. Mims, who dealt with an ankle injury during his final year at Georgia, will ideally get a year of reserve duty under his belt before he's summoned to action, as the Bengals enter 2024 rock-solid on the bookends with Brown on the right side and four-time Pro Bowler Orlando Brown Jr. on the left. The middle is stout, too, with the return of all three starters from last season — Cordell Volson, Ted Karras and Alex Cappa.

They'll be tasked with plowing the way for a new ball-carrier in Cincinnati, as the Bengals went younger at the position with the addition of Zack Moss. The former Colt made the most of Jonathan Taylor's early-season absence in 2023, totalling 794 yards and five touchdowns. He replaces longtime Bengal and new Houston Texan Joe Mixon, who cleared 1,000 yards four times during his seven seasons in Cincinnati.

The bills are coming due at wide receiver, where the Bengals have boasted one of the NFL's best one-two punches over the past few seasons. It just can't last forever, and the Bengals made that clear by placing the franchise tag on Tee Higgins and not entertaining a long-term extension. This understandably didn't sit well with Higgins, who requested a trade but is expected to suit up in orange and black for at least one more season. Ja'Marr Chase, meanwhile, is almost certainly going to be the recipient of a generous extension. Despite an uneven

season at quarterback, Chase put up some of his best numbers yet in 2023, racking up 100 catches for 1,216 yards and seven touchdowns. Chase's chemistry with Burrow is uncanny, and he's clearly the go-to option whenever Cincinnati needs a big play. Still, the Bengals are at their best when both Chase and Higgins are flying around the field together.

The Bengals pounced on the opportunity to upgrade at tight end, moving on from the failed Irv Smith Jr. experiment and adding the proven Mike Gesicki. The longtime Dolphin spent the past season with the Patriots and had his worst numbers since his rookie season. Still, the Bengals believe he can be much better utilized in their system and is poised to thrive with a quarterback who loves looking for his tight ends inside the red zone.

JA'MARR CHASE
WIDE RECEIVER

JOE CAMPOREALE-USA TODAY SPORTS

DEFENSE

Those "bills coming due" didn't just affect the Bengals' wide receivers. The face of Cincinnati's defense over the past three years, end Trey Hendrickson, requested a trade shortly before the draft, citing frustration over the dialogue about a potential long-term extension. Hendrickson has certainly earned it, as he's coming off his best season as a pro (17.5 sacks). The Bengals certainly need an engaged and thriving Hendrickson, who was the bright spot in an otherwise disappointing 2023 for the Bengals defense. They're hoping for another solid season from Sam Hubbard — who has posted at least six sacks in five of his six seasons in the league — and a jolt from new tackle Sheldon Rankins, who replaces D.J. Reader and gives Cincinnati some pass-rushing juice in the middle of its defensive line.

The Bengals are running it back at linebacker with starters Logan Wilson and Germaine Pratt. Wilson rarely left the field and played all 17 games in 2023, racking up a career-high 135 tackles to go along with four interceptions, which was tied for the most on the team. Pratt was similarly healthy and productive with 118 tackles and two picks over the course of 17 games.

The secondary will feature some moving parts in 2024, starting with Dax Hill, who spent his first two seasons at safety but is expected to make the move to cornerback in 2024. This was confirmed by head coach Zac Taylor after the draft, but it was really what Cincinnati did in the offseason — and previous drafts — that fortified this switch. The Bengals brought back Vonn Bell, a fan favorite who shined for Cincinnati during its run to the Super Bowl, and signed former Ravens safety Geno Stone. Bell is expected to compete with promising second-year safety Jordan Battle at strong safety, while Stone, who is coming off his best NFL season yet, is expected to step in at free safety, a position that saw significant dropoff last year for Cincinnati in the wake of Jessie Bates' departure.

Cam Taylor-Britt and D.J. Turner will continue to provide promising young options at cornerback, while Mike Hilton remains entrenched as one of the best nickel cornerbacks in the league.

SPECIALISTS

Kicker Evan McPherson, now in his fourth season, took a bit of a step back in 2023 but only a slight one. He missed five field goals, all of them coming from 50-plus, but should still be considered one of the game's best young kickers. The Bengals went young at punter last year when they drafted Brad Robbins to replace Drue Chrisman, and they're hoping to see him take a big step forward in his second year after an up-and-down rookie campaign.

Charlie Jones, also a 2023 draft pick, shined in spots as the Bengals punt returner during his rookie campaign, and he enters the year as the odds-on favorite to be the top guy in 2024. Jones already has a punt return touchdown under his belt.

FINAL ANALYSIS

If Burrow can stay healthy, the Bengals are an annual Super Bowl contender until further notice. Getting him to the finish line will be a must for a Cincinnati team that feeds off his energy and seemingly saves its best football for January. And while this year's Bengals team may not win the "happiest campers" award, it undoubtedly boasts a talented and proven roster that knows it can compete with anyone in the NFL.

CIN

2023 RESULTS (9-8)

Sept.	10	at Cleveland	L	3-24
Sept.	17	Baltimore	L	24-27
Sept.	25	L.A. Rams	W	19-16
Oct.	1	Tennessee	L	3-27
Oct.	8	at Arizona	W	34-20
Oct.	15	Seattle	W	17-13
Oct.	29	at San Francisco	W	31-17
Nov.	5	Buffalo	W	24-18
Nov.	12	Houston	L	27-30
Nov.	16	at Baltimore	L	20-34
Nov.	26	Pittsburgh	L	10-16
Dec.	4	at Jacksonville (ot)	W	34-31
Dec.	10	Indianapolis	W	34-14
Dec.	17	Minnesota (ot)	W	27-24
Dec.	23	at Pittsburgh	L	11-34
Dec.	31	at Kansas City	L	17-25
Jan.	7	Cleveland	W	31-14

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	318.9	22	10
Rushing	89.8	31	16
Passing	229.1	15	7
Scoring	21.5	16	9
Third Down %	37.6	20	8
Points/Play	0.349	15	8

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	374.6	31	16
Rushing	126.2	26	15
Passing	248.4	28	15
Scoring	22.6	21	12
Interceptions	17	T8	T4
Sacks	44	18	13
Opp. Pts./Play	0.364	21	12
TO Differential	+10	T5	T3

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Joe Burrow	365	244	2,309	15	6
Bake Browning	243	171	1,936	12	7

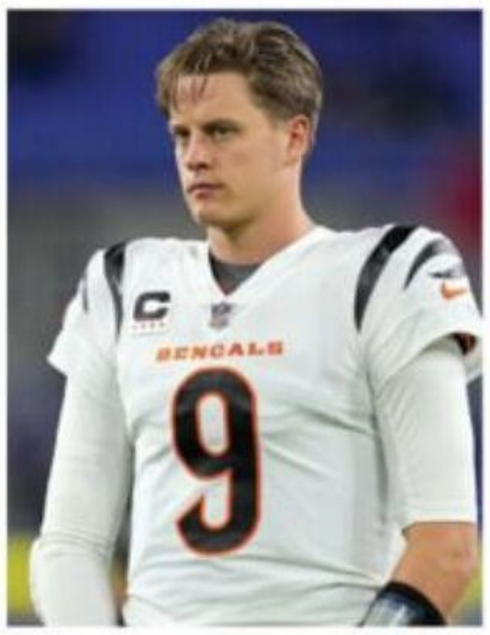
RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Joe Mixon	257	1,034	4.0	9
Chase Brown	44	179	4.1	0

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Ja'Marr Chase	100	1,216	12.2	7
Tyler Boyd	67	667	10.0	2
Joe Mixon	52	376	7.2	3
Tee Higgins	42	656	15.6	5
Tanner Hudson	39	352	9.0	1

KICKING: Evan McPherson, 26-31 FGs, 40-40 PATs, 118 points
TACKLES: Logan Wilson, 135; Germaine Pratt, 118
SACKS: Trey Hendrickson, 17.5; Sam Hubbard, 6.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Logan Wilson, 4; Cam Taylor-Britt, 4

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

BUILT TO BEAT THE BEST **Joe Burrow** doesn't back down from anyone. During an April appearance on the "New Heights" podcast — hosted by NFL brothers Jason and Travis Kelce — live from Cincinnati, Burrow said he believed the Bengals were "built to beat" the defending Super Bowl champion Chiefs. He has plenty of reasons — three of them, to be exact — for feeling that way, as the Bengals have won three of the five meetings with Kansas City since Burrow entered the league. Burrow, though, has only lost once, as he was sidelined with an injury when the Chiefs downed the Bengals, 25-17, late in the 2023 season. Burrow and Travis Kelce will square off at least once in 2024, and Burrow loves the Bengals' chances. "We both work really hard at what we do. They got great players, we've got great players," Burrow said, via *Sports Illustrated*. "I think we match up pretty well with them. We're kind of built to beat them. Both teams have big-time players on defense, big-time defensive lines, so it makes for great matchups."



TATS FOR CHARITY Ted Karras got his first tattoo on St. Patrick's Day, and he was joined by more than 400 of his closest friends. Karras paid for all of the tattoos — a script Cincy with three claw marks, the brand logo for Cincy Hat — as part of an event dubbed "St. Tatty's Day." All proceeds went to Village of Merici, a non-profit near and dear to Karras' heart that provides support to adults with developmental disabilities. Burrow was among the biggest donors for the event, sending $25,000 to ensure that Karras, Cincinnati's reigning Walter Payton Man of the Year nominee, would get his first tattoo.

BREAKFAST'S ON COACH Zac Taylor has made it a tradition of sorts to hit the bars after big Bengals victories to distribute game balls to fans. Recently, in a much calmer setting, Taylor bought breakfast for a local couple that he spotted wearing Bengals gear. "[I] always appreciate that love driving down the road and just seeing people wearing Bengals gear or out jogging or walking," Taylor said, via ESPN. "So when I get a chance to go into these restaurants and see those people, it's just fun to interact with them."

SCOUTING THE BENGALS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP CINCINNATI "It's an extremely delicate contractual situation that Bengals ownership is managing. Yes, the Brown family still has a cheap reputation among agents and players. It's time to take care of Ja'Marr Chase and Tee Higgins. They did the right thing with Joe Burrow. Chase will get done, too. I could see them letting Higgins walk after this year. … There are a lot of character red flags on Jermaine Burton. He's got some growing up to do. … Orlando Brown Jr. had something to prove after leaving the Chiefs, and he did a solid job. … Center Ted Karras is a great leader. … Trent Brown really needs to start dropping some pounds here at the later stages of his career, but I tend to doubt that it will happen. … I don't love the depth situation all-around on offense. This team is a key injury or two away from struggling to be competitive. … Another contract situation that bears watching: Trey Hendrickson. He already requested a trade. He's a professional, but they need to do something to make him happy. … Signing Sheldon Rankins is a sneaky-good move. He had six sacks rushing inside last year for Houston. … Logan Wilson is one of the best all-around linebackers in the NFL. He's great in pass coverage. … Geno Stone is a true ballhawk. That was a good signing. … Evan McPherson's range and accuracy are rare."

SAM GREENE/THE ENQUIRER

2024 BENGALS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
6 Browning, Jake	QB	6-2	209	1	Washington	FA-21	FA-Min-19
9 Burrow, Joe	QB	6-4	215	4	LSU	D1-20	D1-Cin-20
4 Woodside, Logan	QB	6-1	213	4	Toledo	FA-Atl-24	D7-Cin-18

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
30 Brown, Chase	RB	5-10	211	1	Illinois	D5-23	D5-Cin-23
25 Evans, Chris	RB	5-11	215	3	Michigan	D6b-21	D6b-Cin-21
31 Moss, Zack	RB	5-9	205	4	Utah	FA-Ind-24	D3-Buf-20
32 Williams, Trayveon	RB	5-8	206	5	Texas A&M	D6a-19	D6a-Cin-19

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
1 Chase, Ja'Marr	WR	6-0	201	3	LSU	D1-21	D1-Cin-21
88 Gesicki, Mike	TE	6-6	245	6	Penn State	FA-NE-24	D2-Mia-18
5 Higgins, Tee	WR	6-4	219	4	Clemson	D2-20	D2-Cin-20
87 Hudson, Tanner	TE	6-5	239	4	So. Arkansas	FA-22	FA-TB-18
80 Iosivas, Andrei	WR	6-3	205	1	Princeton	D6a-23	D6a-Cin-23
16 Irwin, Trenton	WR	6-2	200	4	Stanford	FA-19	FA-Mia-19
12 Jackson, Shedrick	WR	6-1	195	1	Auburn	FA-23	FA-Cin-23
15 Jones, Charlie	WR	6-0	183	1	Purdue	D4-23	D4-Cin-23
18 Lassiter II, Kwamie	WR	5-11	185	1	Kansas	FA-22	FA-Cin-22
19 Pryor, Kendric	WR	5-11	189	2	Wisconsin	FA-23	FA-Cin-22
89 Sample, Drew	TE	6-5	255	5	Washington	D2-19	D2-Cin-19

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
75 Brown Jr., Orlando	T	6-8	345	6	Oklahoma	FA-KC-23	D3a-Bal-18
77 Brown, Trent	T	6-8	370	9	Florida	FA-NE-24	D7a-SF-15
65 Cappa, Alex	G	6-6	310	6	Humboldt State	FA-TB-22	D3-TB-18
79 Carman, Jackson	T	6-5	322	3	Clemson	D2-21	D2-Cin-21
76 Cochran, Devin	T	6-7	310	1	Georgia Tech	FA-22	FA-Cin-22
61 Ford, Cody	G	6-3	329	5	Oklahoma	FA-Ari-23	D2-Buf-19
66 Gilliam, Nate	C	6-5	300	1	Wake Forest	FA-22	FA-LAC-20
63 Hill, Trey	C	6-4	335	3	Georgia	D6a-21	D6a-Cin-21
64 Karras, Ted	C	6-4	310	8	Illinois	FA-NE-22	D6c-NE-16
60 Kirkland, Jaxson	G	6-7	328	1	Washington	FA-23	FA-Cin-23
70 Smith, D'Ante	T	6-5	309	3	East Carolina	D4c-21	D4c-Cin-21
67 Volson, Cordell	G	6-6	315	2	North Dakota State	D4-22	D4-Cin-22

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
90 Bell, Travis	DT	6-1	305	1	Kennesaw State	W-Atl-23	D7-Chi-23
95 Carter, Zach	DT	6-4	290	2	Florida	D3-22	D3-Cin-22
72 Davis, Domenique	DT	6-2	326	1	N. Carolina-Pembroke	FA-22	FA-NYJ-20
93 Gunter, Jeff	DE	6-4	263	2	Coastal Carolina	D7-22	D7-Cin-22
91 Hendrickson, Trey	DE	6-4	270	7	Florida Atlantic	FA-NO-21	D3c-NO-17
92 Hill, B.J.	DT	6-3	311	6	NC State	T-NYG-21	D3-NYG-18
94 Hubbard, Sam	DE	6-5	265	6	Ohio State	D3a-18	D3a-Cin-18
69 Maxwell, Devonnsha	DT	6-2	297	1	Chattanooga	FA-23	FA-Cin-23
99 Murphy, Myles	DE	6-5	270	1	Clemson	D1-23	D1-Cin-23
58 Ossai, Joseph	DE	6-4	263	3	Texas	D3-21	D3-Cin-21
98 Rankins, Sheldon	DT	6-2	305	8	Louisville	FA-Hou-24	D1-NO-16
96 Sample, Cam	DE	6-3	272	3	Tulane	D4a-21	D4a-Cin-21
97 Tufele, Jay	DT	6-3	305	3	USC	W-Jac-22	D4b-Jac-21

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
49 Bachie, Joe	LB	6-2	235	4	Michigan State	W-Phi-21	FA-NO-20
59 Davis-Gaither, Akeem	LB	6-2	228	4	App State	D4-20	D4-Cin-20
56 Harper, Devin	LB	6-0	238	2	Oklahoma State	W-Dal-23	D6-Dal-22
50 Heyward, Shaka	LB	6-3	238	1	Duke	FA-23	FA-Cin-23
57 Pratt, Germaine	LB	6-3	250	5	NC State	D3-19	D3-Cin-19
55 Wilson, Logan	LB	6-2	245	4	Wyoming	D3-20	D3-Cin-20

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
26 Anderson, Tycen	S	6-2	209	2	Toledo	D5-22	D5-Cin-22
27 Battle, Jordan	S	6-1	210	1	Alabama	D3-23	D3-Cin-23
24 Bell, Vonn	S	5-11	215	8	Ohio State	FA-Car-24	D2b-NO-16
35 Davis, Jalen	CB	5-10	190	4	Utah State	FA-20	FA-Mia-18
42 George, Allan	CB	5-11	191	1	Vanderbilt	FA-22	FA-Cin-22
23 Hill, Dax	S	6-0	191	2	Michigan	D1-22	D1-Cin-22
21 Hilton, Mike	CB	5-9	184	7	Ole Miss	FA-Pit-21	FA-Jac-16
38 Ivey, DJ	CB	6-1	192	1	Miami	D7-23	D7-Cin-23
22 Stone, Geno	S	5-11	210	4	Iowa	FA-Bal-24	D7-Bal-20
29 Taylor-Britt, Cam	CB	5-11	202	2	Nebraska	D2-22	D2-Cin-22
20 Turner II, DJ	CB	5-11	180	1	Michigan	D2-23	D2-Cin-23

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
48 Adomitis, Cal	LS	6-2	238	2	Pittsburgh	FA-22	FA-Cin-22
2 McPherson, Evan	K	5-11	185	3	Florida	D5-21	D5-Cin-21
10 Robbins, Brad	P	6-1	205	1	Michigan	D6b-23	D6b-Cin-23

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	1	Ja'Marr Chase	80	Andrei Iosivas
WR	5	Tee Higgins	15	Charlie Jones
WR	16	Trenton Irwin	81	Jermaine Burton (R)
LT	75	Orlando Brown Jr.	79	Jackson Carman
LG	67	Cordell Volson	61	Cody Ford
C	64	Ted Karras	63	Trey Hill
RG	65	Alex Cappa	60	Jaxson Kirkland
RT	77	Trent Brown	71	Amarius Mims (R)
TE	88	Mike Gesicki	89	Drew Sample
QB	9	Joe Burrow	6	Jake Browning
RB	31	Zack Moss	30	Chase Brown

DEFENSE

DE	94	Sam Hubbard	96	Cam Sample
DT	98	Sheldon Rankins	90	Kris Jenkins (R)
DT	92	B.J. Hill	95	Zach Carter
DE	91	Trey Hendrickson	58	Joseph Ossai
WLB	55	Logan Wilson	49	Joe Bachie
MLB	57	Germaine Pratt	50	Shaka Heyward
SLB	59	Akeem Davis-Gaither	56	Devin Harper
CB	29	Cam Taylor-Britt	23	Dax Hill
CB	20	DJ Turner II	21	Mike Hilton
SS	27	Jordan Battle	24	Vonn Bell
FS	22	Geno Stone	23	Dax Hill

SPECIALISTS

K	2	Evan McPherson	KR 32	Trayveon Williams
P	10	Brad Robbins	PR 15	Charlie Jones

7.1

Net yards per pass attempt allowed by the Bengals defense, the highest figure in the league in 2023.

BENGALS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Amarius Mims	OT	6-7	340	Georgia
2.	Kris Jenkins	DT	6-3	305	Michigan
3.	Jermaine Burton	WR	6-0	194	Alabama
3.	McKinley Jackson	DT	6-2	331	Texas A&M
4.	Erick All	TE	6-5	255	Iowa
5.	Josh Newton	CB	6-0	190	TCU
6.	Tanner McLachlan	TE	6-5	245	Arizona
6.	Cedric Johnson	DE	6-3	260	Ole Miss
7.	Daijahn Anthony	S	6-0	191	Ole Miss
7.	Matt Lee	C	6-3	288	Miami (Fla.)

It remains to be seen whether the Bengals got better through the 2024 NFL Draft, but they undoubtedly got bigger. The addition of Amarius Mims gives Cincinnati, which has devoted a ton of resources to the O-line since the arrival of Joe Burrow, a high-upside, developmental backup who can learn and blossom behind two entrenched vets. The selection of Kris Jenkins should fortify depth on a defensive line that will be looking to fill the void left by D.J. Reader, who is now with the Lions. Jermaine Burton, a productive, four-year player at Alabama and Georgia, has the potential to contribute right away, while Erick All and Tanner McLachlan will battle for reps behind the likes of Mike Gesicki and Drew Sample at tight end.

CLE BROWNS

AFC NORTH FORECAST **4**

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	Dallas	4:25
Sept. 15	at Jacksonville	1:00
Sept. 22	N.Y. Giants	1:00
Sept. 29	at Las Vegas	4:25
Oct. 6	at Washington	1:00
Oct. 13	at Philadelphia	1:00
Oct. 20	Cincinnati	1:00
Oct. 27	Baltimore	1:00
Nov. 3	L.A. Chargers	1:00
Nov. 10	BYE	
Nov. 17	at New Orleans	1:00
Nov. 21	Pittsburgh	8:15
Dec. 2	at Denver	8:15
Dec. 8	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Dec. 15	Kansas City	1:00
Dec. 19	at Cincinnati	8:15
Dec. 29	Miami	8:20
Jan. 4/5	at Baltimore	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Kevin Stefanski
Record With Team: 37-30
Career Record: 37-30
Offensive Coordinator: Ken Dorsey
Defensive Coordinator: Jim Schwartz
Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator: Bubba Ventrone
Quarterbacks: Ashton Grant
Running Backs: Duce Staley
Pass Game Coordinator/Wide Receivers: Chad O'Shea
Tight Ends: Tommy Rees
Offensive Line: Andy Dickerson
Defensive Line: Jacques Cesaire
Linebackers: Jason Tarver
Cornerbacks: Brandon Lynch
Safeties: Ephraim Banda

It's the third year for Deshaun Watson as the Browns' starting quarterback, and the team isn't just waiting for a return on its massive investment in Watson. It heads into a big season waiting for Watson to fully recover from surgery to repair a fractured glenoid in his throwing shoulder, a rare and serious injury for a quarterback.

The Browns have spent big to build a team they believe is ready to become a real AFC contender, and when Watson engineered a big comeback in Baltimore last November, the Browns seemed ready for a leap. But that turned out to be Watson's last game of 2023, and the Browns then went through two more quarterbacks before Joe Flacco and their defense pushed them to the playoffs.

Amari Cooper is back for the final year of his contract. Myles Garrett is the reigning NFL Defensive Player of the Year and has shown that he can change games in multiple ways. The Browns think they have the pieces, the coaches and the continuity to make another big late-season run. But they need Watson to deliver to prevent this window from closing quickly.

OFFENSE

Watson won't be fully cleared until the summer. The Browns added Jameis Winston and Tyler Huntley as veteran backups and insurance policies, but it's Watson who will either deliver or miss when it comes to this team's high hopes and expectations. Flacco saved the Browns last December, but the Browns didn't offer Flacco a new contract, and they know they can't count on any backup to replicate what Flacco did.

Nick Chubb has arguably been the NFL's best running back when healthy, but Chubb is recovering from two surgeries to repair the torn ACL and MCL he suffered last September. The Browns expect Chubb back but won't rush him, so they added veterans Nyheim Hines and D'Onta Foreman to compete for snaps with Jerome Ford, who became the No. 1 back in Chubb's absence last year. Hines is also recovering from a torn ACL, and speedy third-year player Pierre Strong Jr. could also make the roster again after emerging as a top special teams performer last season.

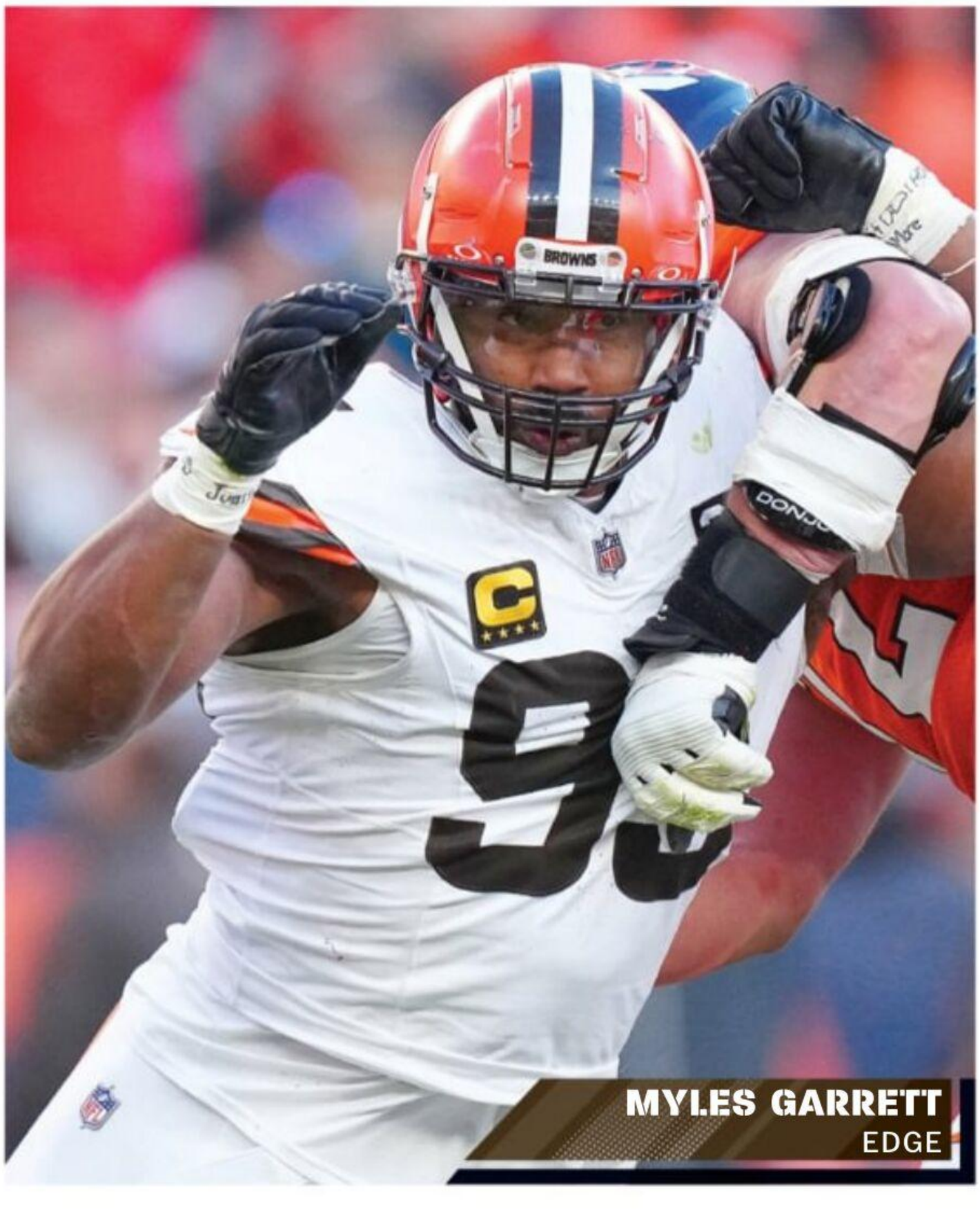
The receiving corps still has Cooper as the clear-cut No. 1, but the Browns also view tight end David Njoku as a top-level playmaker after his big 2023 season. Njoku didn't really take off until after Watson's injury, so getting them connected is another area on which the Browns will focus this summer. Jerry Jeudy was acquired via trade then given a big extension, which seems a risky bet given his rather unremarkable time in Denver. But the Browns believe that Jeudy gives them speed they didn't previously have and that the fifth-year wideout will be in a better offensive environment in Cleveland.

The team hopes to see a second-year leap from Cedric Tillman, who's a big target on the perimeter. The arrival of Jeudy presumably means fewer snaps for Elijah Moore, who's entering the final year of his rookie contract. Moore had an up-and-down first year in Cleveland, but the Browns think he's explosive enough to contribute from the slot. Others fighting for jobs and snaps at wide receiver include James Proche II, David Bell and rookie Jamari Thrash.

Though longtime offensive line coach Bill Callahan departed, the Browns are in the rare spot of returning six starters to their offensive line. The biggest questions are at tackle, where left tackle Jedrick Wills Jr. is only under contract for 2024, and the right tackle spot remains uncertain. Jack Conklin has guaranteed money on his contract that runs through 2026, but Conklin is trying to work his way back from a second torn ACL. Dawand Jones took over for Conklin

and was outstanding for much of his rookie season, but Jones also missed the final month of the season with a knee injury. Jones has rare size and talent, and the Browns have high hopes assuming he can stay healthy.

Pro Bowl guards Joel Bitonio and Wyatt Teller are also back, but probably only for one more year given the amount of money the Browns have spent on the offensive line. Bitonio has long been one of the league's best left guards and heads to his 11th NFL season. Teller, who turns 30 this summer, is a mauler in the run game. Conklin might or might not be ready to return by the start of the season, and there will be a camp battle for interior backup roles involving veterans Michael Dunn and Brian Allen and two young players, Luke Wypler and third-round rookie Zak Zinter.



RON CHENOY-USA TODAY SPORTS

DEFENSE

Last year's defense was inconsistent overall, but the pass rush consistently delivered. Coordinator Jim Schwartz wants his players to attack first, and he believes that constantly pressuring opposing quarterbacks pays dividends even when it doesn't directly result in sacks or turnovers.

With Schwartz's style and Garrett's talents in mind, bringing back veteran front-line players Za'Darius Smith and Shelby Harris topped the team's offseason priority list. Veteran linebacker Jordan Hicks was added, too, in large part because he previously played under Schwartz in Philadelphia. Linebacker Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah is coming off of his best season, and he has the range and instincts to continue to develop.

At its best, this group is hard to block. Dalvin Tomlinson commands enough attention on the interior to allow the linebackers to take chances, while Garrett, Smith and Ogbo Okoronkwo loom as a nightmare for opposing quarterbacks, offensive tackles and play-callers.

The Browns have arguably the league's best cornerback trio in Denzel Ward, Martin Emerson Jr. and Greg Newsome II. Schwartz asks his cornerbacks to play a lot of man coverage and take big-play chances when appropriate, so it's no surprise that Ward had arguably his best season. Safety Grant Delpit was good enough last year to earn a contract extension, but the team needs more from veteran safety Juan Thornhill in his second year with the team.

SPECIALISTS

The Browns feel that their special teams units will be good enough to swing games. Kicker went from a concern to a spot of confidence after the team added Dustin Hopkins last August, but he didn't finish the season due to a hamstring injury. Hopkins has been good when healthy and tied a franchise record for made field goals last season, but his injury history remains a concern.

Punter Corey Bojorquez had another strong season in 2023 and got a new contract in March 2024, and the Browns count on Bojorquez to flip the field and to deliver in what can be difficult Cleveland weather.

The return jobs will be settled in training camp, but the Browns added Hines in large part because of his history as a kickoff returner and the new rules changes designed to make kickoff returns a more important part of the game. Also in the return mix will be Ford, Moore, Proche and Strong.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Browns have spent big to build (and retain) this roster. A year after winning 11 games under wild circumstances and then no-showing in the playoffs, expectations are high. But the Browns will only meet them if their key players can stay healthy and Watson can finally deliver over the course of an entire season.

CLE

2023 RESULTS (11-6)

Sept. 10	Cincinnati	W	24-3
Sept. 18	at Pittsburgh	L	22-26
Sept. 24	Tennessee	W	27-3
Oct. 1	Baltimore	L	3-28
Oct. 15	San Francisco	W	19-17
Oct. 22	at Indianapolis	W	39-38
Oct. 29	at Seattle	L	20-24
Nov. 5	Arizona	W	27-0
Nov. 12	at Baltimore	W	33-31
Nov. 19	Pittsburgh	W	13-10
Nov. 26	at Denver	L	12-29
Dec. 3	at L.A. Rams	L	19-36
Dec. 10	Jacksonville	W	31-27
Dec. 17	Chicago	W	20-17
Dec. 24	at Houston	W	36-22
Dec. 28	N.Y. Jets	W	37-20
Jan. 7	at Cincinnati	L	14-31
Postseason			
Jan. 13	at Houston	L	14-45

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	335.9	16	8
Rushing	118.6	12	5
Passing	217.2	19	8
Scoring	23.3	T10	T4
Third Down %	31.6	29	14
Points/Play	0.326	21	11
TEAM DEFENSE	**STAT**	**NFL Rank**	**AFC Rank**
Total	270.2	1	1
Rushing	105.5	11	5
Passing	164.7	1	1
Scoring	21.3	T13	8
Interceptions	18	T3	T1
Sacks	49	6	6
Opp. Pts./Play	0.388	27	16
TO Differential	-9	T25	14

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Joe Flacco	204	123	1,616	13	8
Deshaun Watson	171	105	1,115	7	4
P.J. Walker	111	54	674	1	4
D. Thompson-Robinson	112	60	440	1	4

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Jerome Ford	204	813	4.0	4
Kareem Hunt	135	411	3.0	9
Pierre Strong Jr.	63	291	4.6	1
Nick Chubb	28	170	6.1	0
Deshaun Watson	26	142	5.5	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
David Njoku	81	882	10.9	6
Amari Cooper	72	1,250	17.4	5
Elijah Moore	59	640	10.8	2
Jerome Ford	44	319	7.3	5

KICKING: Dustin Hopkins, 33-36 FGs, 24-26 PATs, 123 points
TACKLES: Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah, 98; Grant Delpit, 77
SACKS: Myles Garrett, 14.0; Za'Darius Smith, 5.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Martin Emerson Jr., 4; four tied with 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

HE DUNKS, TOO Myles Garrett has shown up on social media breaking backboards during offseason pickup basketball games, and he's often seen shooting jump shots after practice on one of the hoops the Browns keep near the fields. Garrett has talked about dreaming of playing in the NBA, but he knows that won't happen. Last October, Garrett and the NBA's Cleveland Cavaliers announced that he had purchased a minority stake in the team in a deal that includes Garrett serving as a brand ambassador for the Cavaliers. Garrett generally was seated in the first row during Cavaliers' home playoff games this spring.

CHARLES LECLAIRE-USA TODAY SPORTS

GETTING GRAY Through years of futility and what seemed like a never-ending cycle of rebuilding and structural changes, the Browns finally have some continuity. They have some guys who are getting up there, too. The Browns' 90-man offseason roster had 18 players who will be 30 or older during the 2024 season, 10 of them projected starters. Guard **Joel Bitonio**, a six-time Pro Bowl pick, is the team's longest-tenured player as he enters his 11th season.

GIVING BACK Two-time NFL Coach of the Year Kevin Stefanski and his family announced in April the launch of a new foundation focused on serving underprivileged kids in Northeast Ohio. With collaboration from Stefanski's wife, Michelle, and their three children, they decided on the name of the foundation: The Keepers Foundation. Stefanski isn't much for personal spotlight. When he won his second NFL Coach of the Year award in February, he stayed home and chose not to attend the ceremony in Las Vegas.

OLD AND WISE After signing a new deal with the Browns in March, veteran safety Rodney McLeod tweeted "one last ride," an indication that McLeod's 13th NFL season could be his last. The Browns value McLeod's intelligence and experience, and even after he suffered a season-ending injury last November, he continued to attend meetings and practices and served as kind of an extra coach for a talented but young secondary. At 34, McLeod entered training camp as the team's oldest player.

SCOUTING THE BROWNS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP CLEVELAND "Deshaun Watson is under a ton of pressure. He has to get healthy, stay healthy and start living up to that $230 million fully guaranteed contract. This trade has been a total disappointment so far, and that's not even factoring in the legal issues he has been facing. Watson can help himself and the Browns a lot by living up to his potential. Starting to wonder if he has simply lost something, doesn't like playing in cold weather or what. … Jameis Winston is a good backup. … Wouldn't bet against Nick Chubb making a full recovery, but I like the depth behind him with Jerome Ford and D'Onta Foreman. … Amari Cooper is starting to build some chemistry with Watson. … Not sure if Jerry Jeudy is really all that good. … David Njoku is dominant physically and has made steady improvements in every part of his game. … Great offensive line, especially Joel Bitonio, Jedrick Wills Jr. and Wyatt Teller. … Myles Garrett earned that Defensive Player of the Year crown. … I think [general manager] Andrew Berry did a nice job of filling out this defensive line with Dalvin Tomlinson. … Jeremiah Owusu-Koramoah makes a ton of plays. His speed is rare. … Denzel Ward is quite good, but not in the great category. … Grant Delpit gets dinged a lot, but he's rangy and smart. … Greg Newsome II still has some growing up to do. … Ogbo Okoronkwo is a really good situational pass-rusher."

2024 BROWNS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10 Huntley, Tyler	QB	6-1	204	4	Utah	FA-Bal-24	FA-Bal-20
17 Thompson-Robinson, D.	QB	6-2	203	1	UCLA	D5a-23	D5a-Cle-23
4 Watson, Deshaun	QB	6-3	223	7	Clemson	T-Hou-22	D1-Hou-17
5 Winston, Jameis	QB	6-4	231	9	Florida State	FA-NO-24	D1-TB-15

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
24 Chubb, Nick	RB	5-11	227	6	Georgia	D2b-18	D2b-Cle-18
34 Ford, Jerome	RB	5-10	210	2	Cincinnati	D5-22	D5-Cle-22
27 Foreman, D'Onta	RB	6-1	236	5	Texas	FA-Chi-24	D3-Hou-17
22 Hines, Nyheim	RB	5-9	196	6	NC State	FA-Buf-24	D4-Ind-18
41 Kelly Jr., John	RB	5-10	208	3	Tennessee	FA-23	D6-LAR-18
44 Ricci, Giovanni	FB	6-3	240	3	Western Michigan	FA-Car-24	FA-Car-20
20 Strong Jr., Pierre	RB	5-11	215	2	South Dakota State	T-NE-23	D4b-NE-22

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
88 Akins, Jordan	TE	6-4	245	6	UCF	FA-Hou-23	D3-Hou-18
18 Bell, David	WR	6-1	212	2	Purdue	D3c-22	D3c-Cle-22
2 Cooper, Amari	WR	6-1	211	9	Alabama	T-Dal-22	D1-LV-15
16 Darden, Jaelon	WR	5-8	175	3	North Texas	W-TB-22	D4-TB-21
3 Jeudy, Jerry	WR	6-1	193	4	Alabama	T-Den-24	D1-Den-20
83 Mitchell-Paden, Zaire	TE	6-5	257	1	Florida Atlantic	FA-23	FA-Cle-22
8 Moore, Elijah	WR	5-10	180	3	Ole Miss	T-NYJ-23	D2-NYJ-21
85 Njoku, David	TE	6-4	246	7	Miami	D1c-17	D1c-Cle-17
11 Proche II, James	WR	5-11	193	4	SMU	FA-23	D6-Bal-20
19 Tillman, Cedric	WR	6-3	215	1	Tennessee	D3a-23	D3a-Cle-23
12 Woods II, Michael	WR	6-1	204	2	Oklahoma	D6-22	D6-Cle-22

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
74 Adeniji, Hakeem	T	6-4	315	4	Kansas	FA-Min-24	D6-Cin-20
55 Allen, Brian	OL	6-2	303	6	Michigan State	FA-LAR-24	D4a-LAR-18
75 Bitonio, Joel	G	6-4	320	10	Nevada	D2-14	D2-Cle-14
78 Conklin, Jack	T	6-6	308	8	Michigan State	FA-Ten-20	D1-Ten-16
52 Deaton, Dawson	G	6-1	306	2	Texas Tech	D7b-22	D7b-Cle-22
68 Dunn, Michael	G	6-5	315	4	Maryland	FA-23	FA-LAR-17
66 Hudson III, James	T	6-5	313	3	Cincinnati	D4a-21	D4a-Cle-21
65 Ifedi, Germain	OL	6-5	338	8	Texas A&M	FA-24	D1-Sea-16
79 Jones, Dawand	T	6-8	374	1	Ohio State	D4a-23	D4a-Cle-23
Mbaeteka, Roy	OL	6-9	320	1	None	FA-24	FA-NYG-22
55 Pocic, Ethan	C	6-6	320	7	LSU	FA-Sea-22	D2b-Sea-17
77 Teller, Wyatt	G	6-4	315	6	Virginia Tech	T-Buf-19	D5-Buf-18
71 Wills Jr., Jedrick	T	6-4	307	4	Alabama	D1-20	D1-Cle-20
56 Wypler, Luke	C	6-3	303	1	Ohio State	D6-23	D6-Cle-23

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
95 Garrett, Myles	DE	6-4	272	7	Texas A&M	D1a-17	D1a-Cle-17
93 Harris, Shelby	DT	6-2	288	10	Illinois State	FA-23	D7-LV-14
90 Hurst II, Maurice	DT	6-2	290	6	Michigan	FA-23	D5a-LV-18
62 Ika, Siaki	DT	6-3	335	1	Baylor	D3b-23	D3b-Cle-23
72 Jefferson, Quinton	DT	6-4	291	8	Maryland	FA-NYJ-24	D5a-Sea-16
92 Kamara, Sam	DE	6-0	272	2	Stony Brook	FA-23	FA-Chi-21
57 McGuire, Isaiah	DE	6-4	268	1	Missouri	D4b-23	D4b-Cle-23
54 Okoronkwo, Ogbonnia	DE	6-2	250	6	Oklahoma	FA-Hou-23	D5b-LAR-18
50 Peevy, Jayden	DT	6-5	308	1	Texas A&M	FA-24	FA-Ten-22
63 Phelps, Lonnie	DE	6-2	247	1	Kansas	FA-23	FA-Cle-23
99 Smith, Za'Darius	DE	6-4	270	9	Kentucky	T-Min-23	D4a-Bal-15
58 Thomas, Isaiah	DE	6-5	266	2	Oklahoma	D7a-22	D7a-Cle-22
94 Tomlinson, Dalvin	DT	6-3	325	7	Alabama	FA-Min-23	D2-NYG-17
98 Williams, Chris	DT	6-3	302	3	Wagner	FA-23	FA-Ind-20
91 Wright, Alex	DE	6-5	267	2	UAB	D3b-22	D3b-Cle-22

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
30 Bush, Devin	LB	5-11	234	5	Michigan	FA-Sea-24	D1-Pit-19
43 Diabate, Mohamoud	LB	6-4	225	1	Utah	FA-23	FA-Cle-23
42 Fields II, Tony	LB	6-0	222	3	West Virginia	D5a-21	D5a-Cle-21
58 Hicks, Jordan	LB	6-1	236	9	Texas	FA-Min-24	D3-Phi-15
48 Johnson, Caleb	LB	6-1	235	1	Miami	FA-24	FA-NYJ-23
6 Owusu-Koramoah, J.	LB	6-2	221	3	Notre Dame	D2-21	D2-Cle-21
35 Thomas III, Charlie	LB	6-3	216	1	Georgia Tech	FA-23	FA-Cle-23

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
37 Bell, D'Anthony	S	6-1	211	2	West Florida	FA-22	FA-Cle-22
38 Brown, Tony	CB	6-0	199	5	Alabama	FA-Ind-24	FA-LAC-18
9 Delpit, Grant	S	6-3	208	4	LSU	D2-20	D2-Cle-20
23 Emerson Jr., Martin	CB	6-2	201	2	Mississippi State	D3a-22	D3a-Cle-22
31 Gray, Vincent	S	6-2	190	1	Michigan	FA-23	FA-NO-22
25 Hailassie, Kahlef	CB	6-1	195	1	Western Kentucky	W-KC-23	FA-KC-23
28 Hardee, Justin	CB	6-1	200	7	Illinois	FA-NYJ-24	FA-Hou-17
33 Hickman, Ronnie	S	6-1	209	1	Ohio State	FA-23	FA-Cle-23
26 McLeod Jr., Rodney	S	5-10	185	12	Virginia	FA-Ind-23	FA-LAR-12
29 Mitchell, Cameron	CB	5-11	191	1	Northwestern	D5b-23	D5b-Cle-23
0 Newsome II, Greg	CB	6-0	192	3	Northwestern	D1-21	D1-Cle-21
1 Thornhill, Juan	S	6-0	205	5	Virginia	FA-KC-23	D2b-KC-19
21 Ward, Denzel	CB	5-11	190	6	Ohio State	D1b-18	D1b-Cle-18

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
13 Bojorquez, Corey	P	6-0	217	6	New Mexico	FA-GB-22	FA-NE-18
39 Havrisik, Lucas	K	6-2	188	2	Arizona	FA-24	FA-Ind-22
7 Hopkins, Dustin	K	6-2	195	10	Florida State	T-LAC-23	D6-Buf-13
47 Hughlett, Charley	LS	6-4	248	9	UCF	FA-14	FA-Dal-12
36 York, Cade	K	6-1	206	2	LSU	FA-24	D4b-Cle-22

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	2	Amari Cooper	11	James Proche II
WR	3	Jerry Jeudy	8	Elijah Moore
WR	19	Cedric Tillman	18	David Bell
LT	71	Jedrick Wills Jr.	66	James Hudson III
LG	75	Joel Bitonio	68	Michael Dunn
C	55	Ethan Pocic	56	Luke Wypler
RG	77	Wyatt Teller	70	Zak Zinter (R)
RT	79	Dawand Jones	78	Jack Conklin
TE	85	David Njoku	88	Jordan Akins
QB	4	Deshaun Watson	5	Jameis Winston
RB	24	Nick Chubb	34	Jerome Ford

DEFENSE

DE	99	Za'Darius Smith	54	Ogbo Okoronkwo
DT	94	Dalvin Tomlinson	93	Shelby Harris
DT	72	Quinton Jefferson	51	Mike Hall Jr. (R)
DE	95	Myles Garrett	91	Alex Wright
LB	58	Jordan Hicks	42	Tony Fields II
LB	6	J. Owusu-Koramoah	43	Mohamoud Diabate
CB	21	Denzel Ward	31	Vincent Gray
CB	0	Greg Newsome II	29	Cameron Mitchell
NB	23	Martin Emerson Jr.	25	Kahlef Hailassie
S	9	Grant Delpit	33	Ronnie Hickman
S	1	Juan Thornhill	12	Rodney McLeod Jr.

SPECIALISTS

K	7	Dustin Hopkins	KR 22	Nyheim Hines
P	13	Corey Bojorquez	PR 22	Nyheim Hines

-2.8%

Deshaun Watson's completion percentage compared to his expected completion percentage per NFL Next Gen Stats, the second straight year he's completed fewer passes than expected.

BROWNS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: C

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
2.	Mike Hall Jr.	DT	6-3	300	Ohio State
3.	Zak Zinter	G	6-6	310	Michigan
5.	Jamari Thrash	WR	6-0	190	Louisville
6.	Nathaniel Watson	LB	6-0	233	Mississippi State
7.	Myles Harden	CB	5-11	195	South Dakota
7.	Jowon Briggs	DT	6-1	313	Cincinnati

Mike Hall Jr. is a Cleveland native, but more importantly, the Browns believe he's a perfect fit for coordinator Jim Schwartz's attack-style defense. He won't be asked to contribute immediately, but the Browns think he's a gifted pass-rusher who will eventually be impactful. Zak Zinter figures to be a future starting guard, though an eventual move to center isn't out of the question. Nathaniel Watson should make the team as a special teams player who could compete for snaps at Sam linebacker, and Myles Harden continues the team's significant investments in the cornerback position. Overall, the Browns were mostly looking for reinforcements, and they hope they might have stolen more than one future starter.

PIT STEELERS

AFC NORTH FORECAST

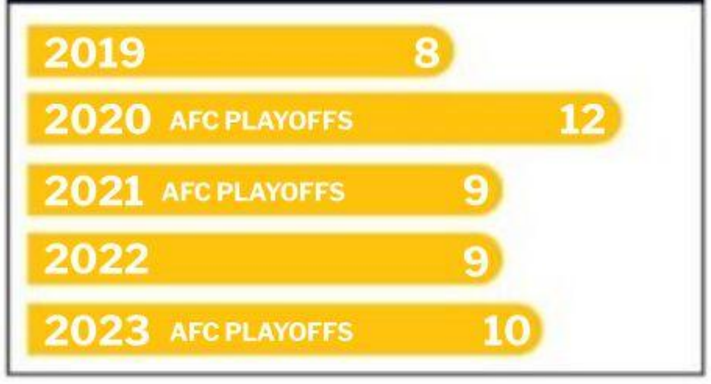
3

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	at Atlanta	1:00
Sept. 15	at Denver	4:25
Sept. 22	L.A. Chargers	1:00
Sept. 29	at Indianapolis	1:00
Oct. 6	Dallas	8:20
Oct. 13	at Las Vegas	4:05
Oct. 20	N.Y. Jets	8:20
Oct. 28	N.Y. Giants	8:15
Nov. 3	BYE	
Nov. 10	at Washington	1:00
Nov. 17	Baltimore	1:00
Nov. 21	at Cleveland	8:15
Dec. 1	at Cincinnati	1:00
Dec. 8	Cleveland	1:00
Dec. 15	at Philadelphia	4:25
Dec. 21	at Baltimore	4:30
Dec. 25	Kansas City	1:00
Jan. 4/5	Cincinnati	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Mike Tomlin
Record With Team: 173-100-2
Career Record: 173-100-2
Offensive Coordinator: Arthur Smith
Defensive Coordinator: Teryl Austin
Special Teams Coordinator: Danny Smith
Quarterbacks: Tom Arth
Running Backs: Eddie Faulkner
Wide Receivers: Zach Azzanni
Tight Ends: Alfredo Roberts
Offensive Line: Pat Meyer
Defensive Line: Karl Dunbar
Outside Linebackers: Denzel Martin
Inside Linebackers: Aaron Curry
Secondary: Grady Brown

Something had to change, and the Steelers made one of the biggest moves of the NFL's offseason to try to prevent another season like 2023 from happening again.

Yes, the Steelers, like they always do under Mike Tomlin, had a winning record in 2023 and were playing meaningful football all the way to the end of the regular season. They even cracked the 10-win mark for the 10th time under Tomlin.

But not all double-digit win seasons are created equal, and anyone who has watched the Steelers toil through the past two seasons knew something had to give. Those changes had to be made on offense, where Pittsburgh has largely floundered since the retirement of quarterback Ben Roethlisberger, and the Steelers front office concluded that 2022 first-round pick Kenny Pickett wasn't the answer they'd hoped for.

Enter Russell Wilson, the Steelers' biggest and boldest swing at fixing the quarterback position.

The low-cost, high-upside move was a single transaction among a sea of them in Pittsburgh this offseason, but it's essentially the only one that matters when assessing the Steelers' chances of reclaiming their spot atop the AFC North.

OFFENSE

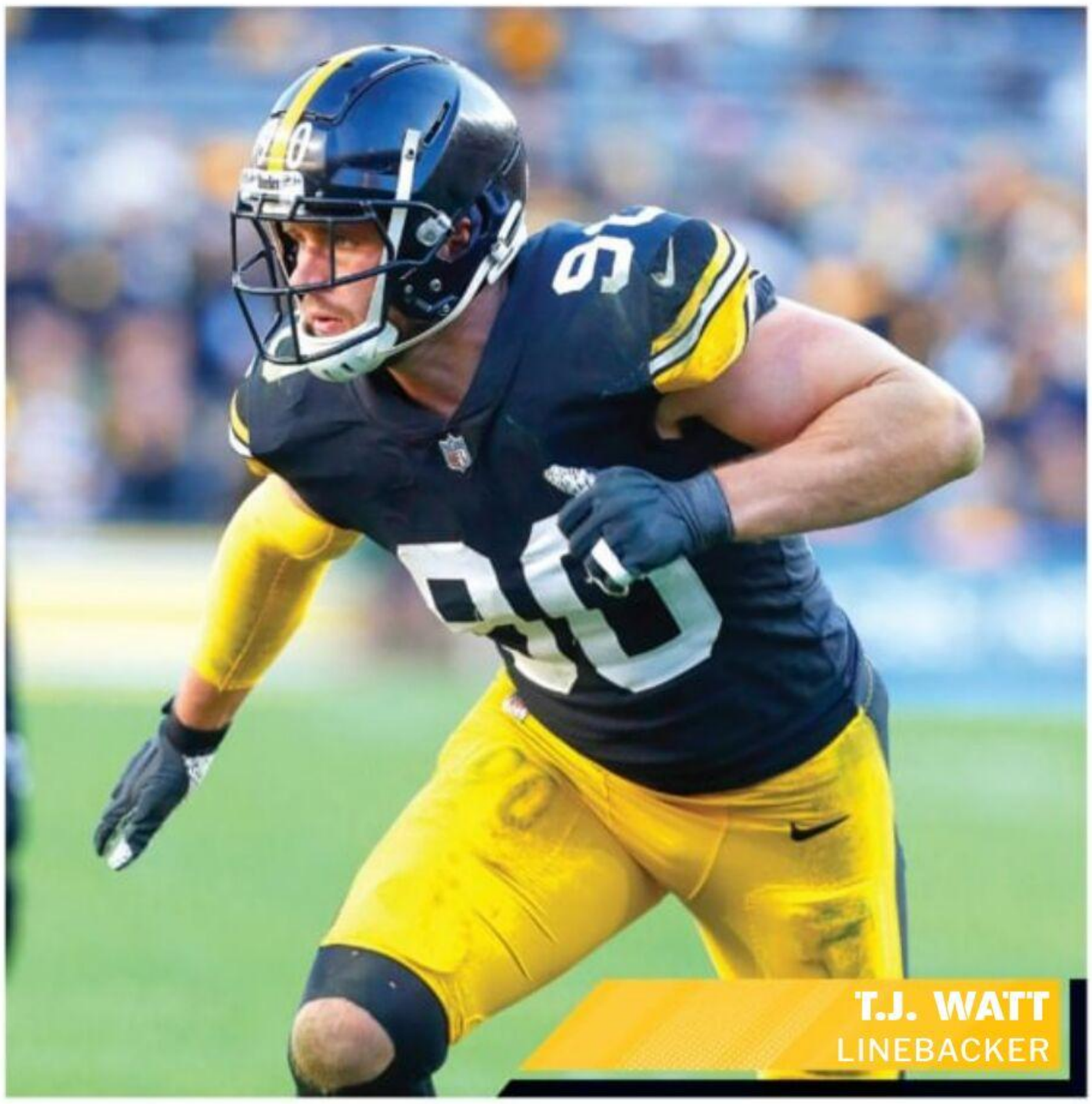
Wilson is out to prove that the past two years are not a reflection of how he should be viewed entering his 13th season. To his credit, Wilson did bounce back a bit under Sean Payton in Denver in 2023, throwing 26 touchdowns to just eight interceptions and elevating his passer rating to a respectable 98.0. The total package, though, just lacked the kind of sizzle Wilson showed during his peak in Seattle. With former Falcons head coach Arthur Smith — who did wonders with Ryan Tannehill during his days with the Titans — now serving as Steelers offensive coordinator, Pittsburgh is confident it can immerse Wilson in a system that makes the most of his veteran savvy and provides opportunities for consistent point-producing. And if Wilson can't get the job done? Well, there's some major insurance in the form of Justin Fields, the former first-round selection whom Pittsburgh acquired via trade from the Bears just a few days after they signed Wilson.

With the decisions they made in the 2024 NFL Draft, the Steelers are also hoping to prevent pass-rushers from getting in the way of Wilson or Fields. For the second consecutive year, the Steelers invested major draft capital in the offensive line, selecting left tackle Troy Fautanu in the first round and then nabbing center Zach Frazier in the second. Throw in fourth-round guard Mason McCormick, who will compete for a starting spot, and last year's first-round pick, Broderick Jones, who is poised to start at right tackle, and you've got the makings of an offensive line that could be one of the league's youngest, but also its most promising.

This likely will be Najee Harris' last year in black and gold, as the Steelers declined to pick up the running back's fifth-year option. The former first-round pick has been solid but nowhere near spectacular. Harris has seen his carries decline in each of his three seasons, and Jaylen Warren, who had 149 carries to Harris' 255 last season, is coming on hot and provides game-changing pop.

There's no questioning George Pickens' talent. This season will be the indicator whether he's ready to ascend into the NFL's top echelon of pass-catchers, especially if Pittsburgh's quarterback situation is rectified. Nothing is standing in his way from exceeding the 63 receptions, 1,140 yards and five touchdowns he

had last season. This season, he'll be the clear No. 1 while rookie Roman Wilson — a third-round selection out of Michigan who could find opportunities right away in the slot — and veterans Van Jefferson, Denzel Mims and Quez Watkins battle for snaps on the other side of the field and Pat Freiermuth keeps doing his thing at tight end. Pittsburgh has certainly boasted a deeper receiving corps in recent years, but there's no matching the potential of Pickens, who has the ability to put together a truly special season if the Steelers' offense improves the way they hope it does.



CHARLES LECLAIRE-USA TODAY SPORTS

DEFENSE

Steelers fans are still salty about T.J. Watt being snubbed for his second NFL Defensive Player of the Year award, but they've likely never felt better about their premier pass-rusher as he pushes through the prime of his career. The numbers don't lie: When Watt is on the field, the Steelers are very, very good, boasting a 69-33-2 record when he plays and a 1-10 mark when he's out. Fellow outside linebacker Alex Highsmith has cashed in plenty on the attention paid to Watt, racking up 21.5 sacks over the past two seasons. In an AFC North division loaded with talented pass-rushers, the Steelers arguably boast the best one-two punch.

With the free-agent signing of former Baltimore linebacker Patrick Queen, Pittsburgh added some much-needed muscle to the middle of its defense while taking away a key player from one of its rivals. Queen is the kind of old-school, hard-hitting linebacker Steelers fans love, and he'll have them wearing his jersey in no time if he's able to fortify the middle of a Pittsburgh defense that was hammered by injuries last season. Cole Holcomb, Elandon Roberts and promising rookie Payton Wilson should compete for snaps alongside him.

In front of these linebackers will be a solid but unremarkable defensive front that didn't get too much attention during the offseason. Perennial Pro Bowler and reigning Walter Payton Man of the Year Cameron Heyward is back for a 14th season, while Larry Ogunjobi, Keeanu Benton, Montravius Adams and others look to increase their production from last year.

Joey Porter Jr., the son of legendary Steelers LB Joey Porter, was a fan favorite as a second-round draft pick in 2023. Now, he's one of the faces of Pittsburgh's secondary, as he's poised to start at one of the outside cornerback positions while Donte Jackson — the return in Pittsburgh's trade of wide receiver Diontae Johnson to Carolina — Cory Trice Jr., Josiah Scott and others vie for roles at the other spots. Minkah Fitzpatrick is still running the show from the back of Pittsburgh's defense, and DeShon Elliott, a five-year veteran who spent last season in Miami, was signed to start alongside him.

SPECIALISTS

With the reliable Chris Boswell returning for his 10th season as Pittsburgh's kicker, the Steelers may just have one of the more veteran-laden special teams units in the entire league.

Pittsburgh's return game is poised to be boosted by the signing of Cordarrelle Patterson, one of the NFL's most dynamic return men who has amassed nine kickoff return touchdowns over his 11 seasons in the league. Though Patterson is nearing the end of his career, he's still dangerous with the ball in his hands and an open field in front of him.

Desperately needing an upgrade at punter, Pittsburgh added veteran Cameron Johnston, who has split his previous six NFL seasons with the Eagles and Texans. Pittsburgh ranked 31st in the NFL in punting average last season.

FINAL ANALYSIS

This is a crossroads year for both the Steelers and Wilson, and the 2024 season will do a lot to clarify what's next for both. Is Wilson really through being a top-tier quarterback? Or can those two forgettable years in Denver be written off as a byproduct of poor circumstances and surroundings? Were the Steelers really just a quarterback away from having a watchable offense? Answers await for a Pittsburgh team that, at minimum, enters the 2024 campaign with one of the NFL's most compelling storylines surrounding it.

2023 RESULTS (10-7)

Sept.	10	San Francisco	L	7-30
Sept.	18	Cleveland	W	26-22
Sept.	24	at Las Vegas	W	23-18
Oct.	1	at Houston	L	6-30
Oct.	8	Baltimore	W	17-10
Oct.	22	at L.A. Rams	W	24-17
Oct.	29	Jacksonville	L	10-20
Nov.	2	Tennessee	W	20-16
Nov.	12	Green Bay	W	23-19
Nov.	19	at Cleveland	L	10-13
Nov.	26	at Cincinnati	W	16-10
Dec.	3	Arizona	L	10-24
Dec.	7	New England	L	18-21
Dec.	17	at Indianapolis	L	13-30
Dec.	23	Cincinnati	W	34-11
Dec.	31	at Seattle	W	30-23
Jan.	7	at Baltimore	W	17-10
Postseason				
Jan.	15	at Buffalo	L	17-31

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	304.3	25	11
Rushing	118.2	13	6
Passing	186.1	25	13
Scoring	17.9	T27	T13
Third Down %	36.6	22	10
Points/Play	0.294	27	14

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	342.1	21	11
Rushing	115.1	19	11
Passing	227.1	17	10
Scoring	19.1	6	4
Interceptions	16	T11	T6
Sacks	47	T11	9
Opp. Pts./Play	0.311	7	4
TO Differential	+11	T3	2

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Kenny Pickett	324	201	2,070	6	4
Mason Rudolph	74	55	719	3	0
Mitch Trubisky	107	67	632	4	5

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Najee Harris	255	1,035	4.1	8
Jaylen Warren	149	784	5.3	4

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
George Pickens	63	1,140	18.1	5
Jaylen Warren	61	370	6.1	0
Diontae Johnson	51	717	14.1	5
Allen Robinson II	34	280	8.2	0
Pat Freiermuth	32	308	9.6	2

KICKING: Chris Boswell, 29-31 FGs, 27-28 PATs, 114 points
TACKLES: Elandon Roberts, 101; T.J. Watt, 68
SACKS: T.J. Watt 19.0; Alex Highsmith, 7.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Four tied with 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

STILL SWINGING Russell Wilson can still ball away from the football field, and he wasted little time showing off his old skill set upon arriving in Pittsburgh. Wilson, a former fourth-round MLB draft pick who spent some time in the minor leagues before fully devoting himself to football, threw out the first pitch and took some batting practice with the Pittsburgh Pirates in April. His skills certainly haven't diminished, either, as he hummed in a fastball for his first pitch and put on a bit of a show during his BP session. Just don't expect many more trips away from the football field anytime soon.

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE One of the most emotional moments of the 2024 NFL Draft involved Steelers first-rounder **Troy Fautanu**, who broke down in tears while fielding the call from Pittsburgh's front office. Fautanu grew up on the other side of the country from Pittsburgh in Henderson, Nevada. His father, though, was one of the many Steelers fans who reside outside of the Steel City, and he raised Fautanu to support the black and gold. "I grew up a Troy Polamalu fan," Fautanu told reporters after he was drafted. "I wore No. 43 pretty much my whole life until I switched to O-line and couldn't wear it. Just growing up, being a fan of the Steelers, I know a lot about the team and the history. I am super excited, and it couldn't have been any better. It's with the team I grew up loving."

QUEEN OF THE CITY Patrick Queen has had a blast playing up his role as a villain after jumping from the Ravens to the Steelers in the offseason. The former Ravens first-round pick was a marquee signing for the Steelers. His decision was a surprising one in the rough-and-tumble AFC North, which rarely sees prominent players go from one team to another. Even Queen admits it's going to be "weird," but he's ready to embrace it. "It's going to be weird, but I want to be that villain. I want to be that guy," Queen told reporters. "I'm looking to do some stuff to them."

SCOUTING THE STEELERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP PITTSBURGH "Bold moves in Pittsburgh as they shook things up at quarterback in a surprising way. Russell Wilson can still play, but he wasn't a good fit in Denver. I could see him having something of a career renaissance with a change of scenery. … Trading for Justin Fields is an intriguing move. The Steelers can groom him and coach him up behind Wilson. This takes the pressure off of him. They should find a way to get him on the field in some capacity to take advantage of his athleticism. … Najee Harris may not have done quite enough to get the fifth-year option exercised, but he's quite the tackle-breaker, and he's sneaky-quick for a big man. … Jaylen Warren is someone you wish you had on your football team. … George Pickens is truly gifted, just needs to focus better. … Liked their pick of Roman Wilson. Very fast, very shifty, good kid. … Offensive line investment is starting to come together. … Cameron Heyward is a bit older, but he still gets the job done. … T.J. Watt is special in every phase of the game. … Alex Highsmith's pass coverage skills took a leap last season. … Elandon Roberts is a tackling machine. … Not a bad contract for the Steelers or Patrick Queen. His knowledge of the AFC North should come in handy. … Secondary, especially Minkah Fitzpatrick, is solid overall. … The punter they signed, Cameron Johnston, has serious hang time and is a good directional punter on rugby kicks, too."

KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 STEELERS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4 Allen, Kyle	QB	6-3	210	5	Houston	FA-Buf-24	FA-Car-18
2 Fields, Justin	QB	6-3	228	3	Ohio State	T-Chi-24	D1-Chi-21
3 Wilson, Russell	QB	5-11	215	12	Wisconsin	FA-Den-24	D3-Sea-12
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
45 Colletto, Jack	FB	6-3	237	1	Oregon State	FA-23	FA-SF-23
22 Harris, Najee	RB	6-1	242	3	Alabama	D1-21	D1-Pit-21
83 Heyward, Connor	FB	6-0	230	2	Michigan State	D6-22	D6-Pit-22
48 Igwebuike, Godwin	RB	6-0	213	4	Northwestern	FA-23	FA-TB-18
84 Patterson, Cordarrelle	RB	6-2	232	11	Tennessee	FA-Atl-24	D1c-Min-13
40 Pottebaum, Monte	FB	6-1	244	1	Iowa	FA-23	FA-Pit-23
33 Shampklin, Aaron	RB	5-10	195	1	Harvard	FA-24	FA-Dal-22
30 Warren, Jaylen	RB	5-8	215	2	Oklahoma State	FA-22	FA-Pit-22
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
19 Austin III, Calvin	WR	5-9	162	2	Memphis	D4-22	D4-Pit-22
17 Callaway, Marquez	WR	6-2	204	4	Tennessee	FA-24	FA-NO-20
82 Fitzpatrick, Dez	WR	6-2	208	2	Louisville	FA-23	D4a-Ten-21
88 Freiermuth, Pat	TE	6-5	258	3	Penn State	D2-21	D2-Pit-21
89 Harris, Keilahn	WR	6-0	180	1	Oklahoma Baptist	FA-24	FA-Atl-23
11 Jefferson, Van	WR	6-1	200	4	Florida	FA-Atl-24	D2b-LAR-20
Miller, Scotty	WR	5-9	174	5	Bowling Green	FA-Atl-24	D6-TB-19
15 Mims, Denzel	WR	6-3	207	4	Baylor	FA-23	D2-NYJ-20
14 Pickens, George	WR	6-3	200	2	Georgia	D2-22	D2-Pit-22
81 Pruitt, MyCole	TE	6-2	258	8	Southern Illinois	FA-Atl-24	D5-Min-15
80 Washington, Darnell	TE	6-7	264	1	Georgia	D3-23	D3-Pit-23
16 Watkins, Quez	WR	6-0	193	4	Southern Miss	FA-Phi-24	D6b-Phi-20
85 Watts, Duece	WR	6-1	196	1	Tulane	FA-23	FA-GB-23
87 Williams, Rodney	TE	6-4	235	1	Tennessee-Martin	FA-22	FA-Den-22
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
74 Anderson, Spencer	OL	6-5	305	1	Maryland	D7b-23	D7b-Pit-23
69 Beach, Tyler	G/T	6-6	290	1	Wisconsin	FA-24	FA-Hou-23
60 Cook, Dylan	T	6-5	280	1	Montana	FA-23	FA-TB-22
78 Daniels, James	OL	6-4	327	6	Iowa	FA-Chi-22	D2a-Chi-18
72 Diesch, Kellen	OL	6-7	300	1	Arizona State	FA-23	FA-Mia-22
67 Hamilton, Devery	OL	6-6	311	2	Duke	FA-24	FA-LV-21
68 Hardy, Anderson	C	6-6	301	1	App State	FA-24	FA-KC-23
71 Herbig, Nate	OL	6-4	334	5	Stanford	FA-NYJ-23	FA-Phi-19
77 Jones, Broderick	T	6-5	311	1	Georgia	D1-23	D1-Pit-23
62 McCollum, Ryan	C	6-5	300	2	Texas A&M	W-Det-22	FA-Hou-21
65 Moore Jr., Dan	T	6-5	315	3	Texas A&M	D4a-21	D4a-Pit-21
73 Seumalo, Isaac	OL	6-4	303	8	Oregon State	FA-Phi-23	D3-Phi-16
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
57 Adams Sr., Montravius	DT	6-4	304	7	Auburn	FA-21	D3-GB-17
95 Benton, Keeanu	DT	6-4	309	1	Wisconsin	D2b-23	D2b-Pit-23
96 Fehoko, Breiden	DL	6-3	300	3	LSU	FA-LAC-23	FA-LAC-20
97 Heyward, Cameron	DE	6-5	295	13	Ohio State	D1-11	D1-Pit-11
98 Leal, DeMarvin	DE	6-4	290	2	Texas A&M	D3-22	D3-Pit-22
92 Loudermilk, Isaiahh	DT	6-7	293	3	Wisconsin	D5-21	D5-Pit-21
94 Lowry, Dean	DL	6-6	296	8	Northwestern	FA-Min-24	D4b-GB-16
91 Marshall, Jonathan	DL	6-3	310	2	Arkansas	W-NYJ-22	D6c-NYJ-21
99 Ogunjobi, Larry	DT	6-3	305	7	Charlotte	FA-22	D3-Cle-17
Slade, Jacob	DL	6-3	293	1	Michigan State	FA-24	FA-Ari-23
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
51 Herbig, Nick	LB	6-2	240	1	Wisconsin	D4-23	D4-Pit-23
56 Highsmith, Alex	LB	6-4	242	4	Charlotte	D3-20	D3-Pit-20
55 Holcomb, Cole	LB	6-1	240	5	North Carolina	FA-Was-23	D5b-Was-19
53 Johnson, Kyron	LB	6-0	235	2	Kansas	FA-23	D6a-Phi-22
49 Moon, Jeremiah	LB	6-5	250	1	Florida	W-Bal-24	FA-Bal-22
40 Murray, Tyler	LB	6-1	226	1	Memphis	FA-24	FA-Cin-23
33 Perales, David	LB	6-3	255	1	Fresno State	FA-23	FA-Pit-23
6 Queen, Patrick	LB	6-0	230	4	LSU	FA-Bal-24	D1-Bal-20
50 Roberts, Elandon	LB	6-1	238	8	Houston	FA-Mia-23	D6b-NE-16
93 Robinson, Mark	LB	5-11	235	2	Ole Miss	D7a-22	D7a-Pit-22
90 Watt, T.J.	LB	6-4	252	7	Wisconsin	D1-17	D1-Pit-17
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
Averett, Anthony	CB	5-11	185	5	Alabama	FA-24	D4a-Bal-18
35 Barcoo, Luq	CB	6-1	180	2	San Diego State	FA-23	FA-Jac-20
31 Barnes, Kalon	CB	6-0	186	1	Baylor	FA-24	D7-Car-22
25 Elliott, DeShon	S	6-1	210	6	Texas	FA-Mia-24	D6a-Bal-18
41 Elliott, Jalen	S	6-0	206	2	Notre Dame	FA-23	FA-Det-20
39 Fitzpatrick, Minkah	S	6-1	207	6	Alabama	T-Mia-19	D1-Mia-18
37 Graham Jr., Thomas	CB	5-11	197	2	Oregon	FA-24	D6-Chi-21
26 Jackson, Donte	CB	5-10	180	6	LSU	T-Car-24	D2-Car-18
23 Kazee, Damontae	S	5-11	174	8	San Diego State	FA-22	D5-Atl-17
28 Killebrew, Miles	S	6-2	222	8	Southern Utah	FA-22	D4-Pit-16
38 Meadors, Nate	S	5-11	194	1	UCLA	FA-24	FA-Min-19
24 Porter Jr., Joey	CB	6-2	193	1	Penn State	D2a-23	D2a-Pit-23
21 Rush, Darius	CB	6-2	198	1	South Carolina	FA-23	D5-Ind-23
42 Scott, Josiah	CB	5-9	185	4	Michigan State	FA-24	D4a-Jac-20
17 Thompson, Trenton	S	6-1	196	1	San Diego State	FA-23	FA-NYG-22
27 Trice Jr., Cory	DB	6-3	206	1	Purdue	D7a-23	D7a-Pit-23
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
9 Boswell, Chris	K	6-2	185	9	Rice	FA-15	FA-Hou-14
5 Johnston, Cameron	P	5-11	194	6	Ohio State	FA-Hou-24	FA-Phi-17
46 Kuntz, Christian	LS	6-1	228	3	Duquesne	FA-20	FA-NE-17
8 Wright, Matthew	K	6-0	179	4	UCF	FA-24	FA-Pit-19

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	14	George Pickens	16	Quez Watkins
WR	11	Van Jefferson	15	Denzel Mims
WR	19	Calvin Austin III		Roman Wilson (R)
LT	76	Troy Fautanu (R)	65	Dan Moore Jr.
LG		Mason McCormick (R)	73	Isaac Seumalo
C		Zach Frazier (R)	71	Nate Herbig
RG	78	James Daniels	74	Spencer Anderson
RT	77	Broderick Jones	60	Dylan Cook
TE	88	Pat Freiermuth	80	Darnell Washington
QB	3	Russell Wilson	2	Justin Fields
RB	22	Najee Harris	30	Jaylen Warren

DEFENSE

DE	99	Larry Ogunjobi	94	Dean Lowry
DT	95	Keeanu Benton	57	Montravius Adams Sr.
DE	97	Cameron Heyward	98	DeMarvin Leal
SLB	56	Alex Highsmith		Payton Wilson (R)
ILB	55	Cole Holcolmb	50	Elandon Roberts
ILB	6	Patrick Queen	93	Mark Robinson
WLB	90	T.J. Watt	49	Jeremiah Moon
CB	26	Donte Jackson	42	Josiah Scott
CB	24	Joey Porter Jr.	27	Cory Trice Jr.
SS	25	DeShon Elliott	23	Damontae Kazee
FS	39	Minkah Fitzpatrick	17	Trenton Thompson

SPECIALISTS

K	9	Chris Boswell	KR 84	Cordarrelle Patterson
P	5	Cameron Johnston	PR 19	Calvin Austin III

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Najee Harris (30) and Jaylen Warren (27) each finished in the top five in broken tackles on rushing attempts in 2023 per Pro Football Reference.

STEELERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Troy Fautanu	OT	6-4	317	Washington
2.	Zach Frazier	C	6-3	310	West Virginia
3.	Roman Wilson	WR	5-10	186	Michigan
3.	Payton Wilson	LB	6-4	242	NC State
4.	Mason McCormick	OG	6-5	315	South Dakota St.
6.	Logan Lee	DT	6-5	286	Iowa
7.	Ryan Watts	CB	6-3	208	Texas

It's hard to find any holes in the Steelers' 2024 class, which should provide immediate help to an area — the offensive line — that's hampered Pittsburgh for years. The selection of Troy Fautanu marks the second straight year in which the Steelers have used a first-round pick on a tackle. Both are likely to start in 2024, with Fautanu manning the left and Broderick Jones the right. Zach Frazier will take over in the middle of the line, and Mason McCormick, a steal in the fourth round, will have a great opportunity to start at left guard. Tack on the addition of Payton Wilson, the 2023 Butkus Award winner, in the third round, and it's hard to list many teams above the Steelers when it comes to 2024 draft grades.

TEXANS

AFC SOUTH FORECAST 1

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	at Indianapolis	1:00
Sept. 15	Chicago	8:20
Sept. 22	at Minnesota	1:00
Sept. 29	Jacksonville	1:00
Oct. 6	Buffalo	1:00
Oct. 13	at New England	1:00
Oct. 20	at Green Bay	1:00
Oct. 27	Indianapolis	1:00
Oct. 31	at N.Y. Jets	8:15
Nov. 10	Detroit	8:20
Nov. 18	at Dallas	8:15
Nov. 24	Tennessee	1:00
Dec. 1	at Jacksonville	1:00
Dec. 8	BYE	
Dec. 15	Miami	1:00
Dec. 21	at Kansas City	1:00
Dec. 25	Baltimore	4:30
Jan. 4/5	at Tennessee	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: DeMeco Ryans
Record With Team: 10-7
Career Record: 10-7
Offensive Coordinator: Bobby Slowik
Defensive Coordinator: Matt Burke
Special Teams Coordinator: Frank Ross
Quarterbacks: Jerrod Johnson
Running Backs: Danny Barrett
Wide Receivers/Pass Game Coordinator: Ben McDaniels
Tight Ends: Jake Moreland
Offensive Line: Chris Strausser
Defensive Line: Rod Wright
Linebackers: Bill Davis
Defensive Backs: Dino Vasso
Safeties: Stephen Adegoke

After going from worst to first in the AFC South in DeMeco Ryans' first season as head coach, the Texans are favored to repeat as division champions. They hope to be a Super Bowl contender, but they're faced with the kind of obstacles that could derail their best-laid plans. Let's start with a first-place schedule that features five defending division champions, seven playoff teams, 11 games against teams that finished 2023 with winning records and an improved division that included three teams with winning records.

To make a tough schedule even more difficult, check out the Murderer's Row of quarterbacks they're expected to play against: Patrick Mahomes, Lamar Jackson, Josh Allen, Dak Prescott, Aaron Rodgers, Tua Tagovailoa, Jordan Love, Jared Goff, Caleb Williams and J.J. McCarthy. And that's not including AFC South quarterbacks Trevor Lawrence, Anthony Richardson and Will Levis.

OFFENSE

Quarterback C.J. Stroud was voted NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year. Including playoffs, he finished with a 10-7 record as a starter. He threw for 4,108 regular-season yards and 23 touchdowns, with only five interceptions. He completed 63.9 percent of his passes, averaged 8.2 yards per attempt, was sacked 38 times and compiled a 100.8 rating. He joined Joe Montana and Tom Brady as the only quarterbacks over the last 50 years to lead the NFL in both average passing yards per game (273.9) and touchdown-to-interception ratio.

Stroud's season of experience combined with his pocket presence, decision-making and accuracy should make him even more productive in offensive coordinator Bobby Slowik's scheme that relies heavily on timing and precision. Stroud was coached very well by Slowik, quarterbacks coach Jerrod Johnson and backup quarterback Case Keenum, who became a mentor in Stroud's rookie season. The coaches know opposing defensive coordinators have spent a lot of time during the offseason figuring out ways to contain Stroud, and Slowik will have to counter.

To help with Stroud's encore performance, general manager Nick Caserio traded for wide receiver Stefon Diggs and running back Joe Mixon. Diggs, who has had at least 100 receptions for six consecutive seasons, received a restructured contract, making it a one-year deal. Diggs should be on his best behavior with a chance to become a free agent. He was Josh Allen's go-to receiver, but he joins a group with more talent and variety than he had with the Bills.

Nico Collins (80 catches, 1,297 yards, eight touchdowns) had a breakout season and enters the last year of his contract. He excels on slant routes and eating up yardage after the catch. Before he was injured in his 11th game, rookie Tank Dell became a big-time weapon. Dell has hummingbird quickness and can make plays all over the field. Tight end Dalton Schultz was re-signed. Schultz is a reliable mid-range target who's also one of Stroud's favorites. Schultz excels on routes over the middle as well as near the boundary.

The running game has been a problem since 2019. Ryans and Slowik are hoping Mixon can help alleviate some pressure on Stroud. They believe Mixon will fit nicely into their one-cut, zone scheme. Last season, the Texans were tied for 22nd in rushing with 96.9 yards per game, including 3.7 per carry. In his last season with the Bengals, Mixon ran for 1,034 yards and nine touchdowns and caught 52 passes for 376 yards and three scores. Mixon, Dameon Pierce and sixth-round pick Jawhar Jordan are being counted on to improve a running game that hasn't averaged triple digits since 2019.

One reason the Texans had such an anemic running game was the alarming number of injuries along the offensive line. Right guard Shaq Mason was the only player on the team who started all 17 games.

Barring injuries, Mason, left tackle Laremy Tunsil, center Juice Scruggs and right tackle Tytus Howard enter training camp with starting jobs locked down. There's competition at left guard among Jarrett Patterson, Kenyon Green and Kendrick Green. Because this is their second season in a zone scheme, this group should operate with more efficiency.

TROY TAORMINA-USA TODAY SPORTS

DEFENSE

To prepare for the onslaught of opposing quarterbacks, Caserio signed 14 defensive free agents, re-signed four and drafted five players on that side of the ball. The most prominent free-agent additions are ends Danielle Hunter and Denico Autry, tackles Foley Fatukasi and Tim Settle, linebacker Azeez Al-Shaair and cornerbacks Jeff Okudah and C.J. Henderson.

Without a first-round pick, Caserio used second- and third-round draft choices on cornerback Kamari Lassiter and free safety Calen Bullock. With a vacancy at cornerback opposite Derek Stingley Jr., Lassiter has the best chance of being in the lineup for the first game. If Stingley can stay healthy in his third season, he can become a perennial Pro Bowl selection. He often covers the best receiver. He shows talent, instincts, makeup ability and a nasty disposition when he wants the ball. Lassiter is a two-time national champion and team captain from Georgia who brings the kind of physicality Ryans demands from his defensive backs.

Not often does a defense set a franchise record with 46 sacks and make three changes among the starting linemen. Right end Will Anderson Jr., the NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year, is the only starting lineman who returns. End Jonathan Greenard and right tackle Sheldon Rankins left in free agency. Left tackle Maliek Collins was traded. Anderson, who set a team rookie record with seven sacks, will play opposite Hunter, who had 16.5 sacks in his last season with the Vikings. Autry, who had a career-high 11.5 sacks with the Titans last season, has averaged 9.5 since he turned 31.

Since the Texans will play two linebackers about 70 percent of the time, the starters will be Al-Shaair, the Titans' leading tackler last season, and Christian Harris, who could be on his way to elite status. Al-Shaair is a tackling machine who also played for Ryans with the 49ers. Harris is fast and makes a lot of big plays against the run and in coverage.

Jalen Pitre and Jimmie Ward return as the starting safeties. Ward spent the last part of the season on injured reserve, and he's the Texans' defensive leader as well as their most physical player. That's why he gets injured a lot. Even though there is experience in the secondary, it might not be long before Bullock joins Lassiter in the lineup. He's 6-foot-2 with 4.4 speed and gives them a center fielder they didn't have last season.

SPECIALISTS

The Texans' special teams have been terrific under coordinator Frank Ross. Just about every player signed or drafted is expected to make a significant contribution to special teams. Kicker Ka'imi Fairbairn is going into his eighth season after making a career-high 96.4 percent of his field goals in 2023. Snapper Jon Weeks, the senior member of the team entering his 15th season, has never had a bad snap. New punter Tommy Townsend replaces Cameron Johnston. Townsend, who can flash the Super Bowl rings he won in his four seasons at Kansas City, brings a gross average of 47.1 yards and a net of 41.9. Because of injuries, the Texans had four players return at least four kickoffs and four who returned at least four punts. Ideally, Dell will be the punt returner and Pierce the kickoff returner.

FINAL ANALYSIS

As Jacksonville found out last season when the Jaguars were the consensus pick to successfully defend their AFC South title, the Texans will face a rocky road against a first-place schedule. If Stroud stays healthy and the new additions pay off, they believe they can become a bona-fide Super Bowl contender.

HOU

2023 RESULTS (10-7)

Sept.	10	at Baltimore	L	9-25
Sept.	17	Indianapolis	L	20-31
Sept.	24	at Jacksonville	W	37-17
Oct.	1	Pittsburgh	W	30-6
Oct.	8	at Atlanta	L	19-21
Oct.	15	New Orleans	W	20-13
Oct.	29	at Carolina	L	13-15
Nov.	5	Tampa Bay	W	39-37
Nov.	12	at Cincinnati	W	30-27
Nov.	19	Arizona	W	21-16
Nov.	26	Jacksonville	L	21-24
Dec.	3	Denver	W	22-17
Dec.	10	N.Y. Jets	L	6-30
Dec.	17	at Tennessee (ot)	W	19-16
Dec.	24	Cleveland	L	22-36
Dec.	31	Tennessee	W	26-3
Jan.	7	at Indianapolis	W	23-19
Postseason				
Jan.	13	Cleveland	W	45-14
Jan.	20	at Baltimore	L	10-34

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	342.4	12	5
Rushing	96.9	T22	T10
Passing	245.5	7	3
Scoring	22.2	T13	T6
Third Down %	37.9	19	7
Points/Play	0.368	10	4
TEAM DEFENSE	**STAT**	**NFL Rank**	**AFC Rank**
Total	330.7	14	8
Rushing	96.6	6	2
Passing	234.1	23	13
Scoring	20.8	11	6
Interceptions	14	16	10
Sacks	46	T13	T10
Opp. Pts./Play	0.330	10	7
TO Differential	+10	T5	T3

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
C.J. Stroud	499	319	4,108	23	5
Case Keenum	53	34	291	1	3
Davis Mills	39	18	173	2	0
RUSHING	**ATT**	**YDS**	**AVG**	**TD**	
Devin Singletary	216	898	4.2	4	
Dameon Pierce	145	416	2.9	2	
C.J. Stroud	39	167	4.3	3	
RECEIVING	**REC**	**YDS**	**AVG**	**TD**	
Nico Collins	80	1,297	16.2	8	
Dalton Schultz	59	635	10.8	5	
Tank Dell	47	709	15.1	7	
Robert Woods	40	426	10.7	1	
Noah Brown	33	567	17.2	2	
Devin Singletary	30	193	6.4	0	

KICKING: Ka'imi Fairbairn, 27-28 FGs, 21-22 PATs, 102 points
TACKLES: Blake Cashman, 104; Christian Harris, 100
SACKS: Jonathan Greenard, 12.5; Will Anderson Jr., 7.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Derek Stingley Jr., 5; Steven Nelson, 4

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

THE NEXT MAGIC AND BIRD? C.J. Stroud and Cowboys pass-rusher extraordinaire **Micah Parsons** have become close friends who spent a lot of time together during the offseason. At the NBA All-Star Celebrity Game in Indianapolis, Stroud scored 31 points but lost the MVP Award to Parsons, who earned bragging rights after scoring 37 points and pulling down 16 rebounds.

DON'T GET COCKY Stroud and Parsons attended an NBA playoff game between the Knicks and 76ers. Sitting together in floor seats, they met Sixers great Allen Iverson. Parsons told Stroud he could beat Iverson one-on-one and average 15 points per game if he left the Cowboys for the NBA. Stroud laughed and said, "Micah being delusional, as usual."

WRONG PLACE, WRONG TIME The Texans received quite a scare the night after the draft ended when second-year receiver Tank Dell was injured in a mass shooting in Florida. He suffered minor injuries and was treated and released from a hospital. Dell was one of 10 wounded by gunshots at a party by a 16-year-old who pulled out a handgun when he got into an argument.

MESS WITH THE BULL, GET THE HORNS Tight end Cade Stover, the Texans' fourth-round pick from Ohio State, grew up on a farm. The NFL Network got a video that played numerous times during the last day of the draft that showed Stover baling hay and massaging a bull to make his hands stronger. He'll fit right in with the Texans, whose logo is a bull with horns. And to make Stover feel right at home, there are multiple statues of bulls outside NRG Stadium.

HUNTER BECAME THE HUNTED New defensive end Danielle Hunter, who left the Vikings for the Texans, received a two-year contract worth $49 million to come home to Houston. After recording 16.5 sacks in the last year of his contract with Minnesota, Hunter visited his hometown and attended the Texans' 45-14 wild-card victory over the Browns before the largest (71,946) and most vocal crowd of the season. The victory, the pandemonium inside NRG Stadium and the encouragement from his family helped convince Hunter to sign with the Texans. And $49 million didn't hurt, either, of course.

SCOUTING THE TEXANS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP HOUSTON "C.J. Stroud is incredible. Special, special arm talent. Great touch and understanding of the game. Love their future with him under center and DeMeco Ryans as their head coach. DeMeco turned this franchise around. … They're rolling the dice a bit with Stefon Diggs from a chemistry standpoint, but I could see him embracing the fresh start, the one-year rental aspect of his contract and getting along well with C.J. and DeMeco. … Nico Collins is the next man up when it comes to a contract extension in Houston. He earned a new deal last season. It was a breakthrough year. … Rough offseason for Tank Dell, but outlook is good after the broken fibula last season and minor gunshot wound. As a rookie, Tank was great. … Between Diggs, Collins and Dell and tight end Dalton Schultz, this is one of the most dangerous receiving corps in the NFL. ... Laremy Tunsil is still one of the most physically gifted and technically sound pass-blockers in the NFL. … Shaq Mason gets the job done at right guard. He's as advertised. … Danielle Hunter is a track athlete in a defensive end's body. … Will Anderson Jr. plays the game the right way and is pretty physically gifted, too. … Denico Autry brings an edge to the defense. He's about that action. … Light clicked on under Ryans' coaching for Christian Harris last season. He plays so fast and, now, he's under control. … Derek Stingley Jr. has All-Pro talent and fundamentals."

TREVOR RUSZKOWSKI-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 TEXANS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16 Boyle, Tim	QB	6-4	233	4	Eastern Kentucky	FA-23	FA-GB-18
18 Keenum, Case	QB	6-1	215	11	Houston	FA-Buf-23	FA-Hou-12
10 Mills, Davis	QB	6-4	225	3	Stanford	D3a-21	D3a-Hou-21
7 Stroud, C.J.	QB	6-3	218	1	Ohio State	D1a-23	D1a-Hou-23

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
47 Beck, Andrew	FB	6-3	255	5	Texas	FA-Den-23	FA-NE-19
26 Doaks, Gerrid	RB	5-11	228	1	Cincinnati	FA-24	D7-Mia-21
34 Hairston, Troy	FB	5-11	245	2	Central Michigan	FA-22	FA-Hou-22
28 Mixon, Joe	RB	6-1	220	7	Oklahoma	T-Cin-24	D2-Cin-17
33 Ogunbowale, Dare	RB	5-10	205	5	Wisconsin	FA-Jac-22	FA-Hou-17
31 Pierce, Dameon	RB	5-10	215	2	Florida	D4a-22	D4a-Hou-22
38 Taylor, J.J.	RB	5-6	185	3	Arizona	FA-23	FA-NE-20

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
85 Brown, Noah	WR	6-2	225	6	Ohio State	FA-Dal-23	D7b-Dal-17
12 Collins, Nico	WR	6-4	222	3	Michigan	D3b-21	D3b-Hou-21
3 Dell, Tank	WR	5-10	165	1	Houston	D3-23	D3-Hou-23
1 Diggs, Stefon	WR	6-0	191	9	Maryland	T-Buf-24	D5b-Min-15
19 Hutchinson, Xavier	WR	6-3	210	1	Iowa State	D6b-23	D6b-Hou-23
88 Johnson III, Johnny	WR	6-1	199	1	Oregon	FA-22	FA-Hou-22
9 Jordan, Brevin	TE	6-3	245	3	Miami	D5a-21	D5a-Hou-21
40 Keene, Dalton	TE	6-4	251	2	Virginia Tech	FA-23	D3-NE-20
8 Metchie III, John	WR	6-0	195	1	Alabama	D2b-22	D2b-Hou-22
84 Quitoriano, Teagan	TE	6-6	259	2	Oregon State	D5b-22	D5b-Hou-22
86 Schultz, Dalton	TE	6-5	242	6	Stanford	FA-Dal-23	D4b-Dal-18
82 Sims, Steven	WR	5-10	176	4	Kansas	FA-Pit-23	FA-Was-19
18 Skowronek, Ben	WR	6-3	224	3	Notre Dame	D7b-21	D7b-LAR-21
89 Wayne, Jared	WR	6-3	210	1	Pittsburgh	FA-23	FA-Hou-23
2 Woods, Robert	WR	6-0	193	11	USC	FA-Ten-23	D2a-Buf-13

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
64 Broeker, Nick	G	6-5	305	1	Ole Miss	W-Buf-23	D7-Buf-23
60 Eiselen, Dieter	G	6-4	300	2	Yale	FA-23	FA-Chi-20
53 Green, Kendrick	C/G	6-3	310	2	Illinois	T-Pit-23	D3-Pit-21
76 Green, Kenyon	G	6-4	325	2	Texas A&M	D1b-22	D1b-Hou-22
67 Heck, Charlie	T	6-8	315	4	North Carolina	D4a-20	D4a-Hou-20
71 Howard, Tytus	T	6-5	322	5	Alabama State	D1-19	D1-Hou-19
69 Mason, Shaq	G	6-1	310	9	Georgia Tech	T-TB-23	D4c-NE-15
68 Patterson, Jarrett	C/G	6-4	310	1	Notre Dame	D6a-23	D6a-Hou-23
75 Sharpe, David	T	6-6	346	5	Florida	FA-Car-24	D4-LV-17
70 Scruggs, Juice	C/G	6-3	310	1	Penn State	D2-23	D2-Hou-23
72 Thomas, Jaylon	T	6-5	311	1	SMU	FA-23	FA-Bal-23
78 Tunsil, Laremy	T	6-5	313	8	Ole Miss	T-Mia-19	D1-Mia-16
66 Zierer, Kilian	T	6-7	312	1	Auburn	FA-23	FA-Hou-23

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
58 Agim, McTelvin	DT	6-3	300	3	Arkansas	FA-24	D3-Den-20
96 Autry, Denico	DL	6-5	285	10	Mississippi State	FA-Ten-24	FA-LV-14
51 Anderson Jr., Will	DE	6-4	243	1	Alabama	D1b-23	D1b-Hou-23
95 Barnett, Derek	DE	6-3	259	7	Tennessee	W-Phi-23	D1-Phi-17
94 Davis, Khalil	DT	6-2	315	3	Nebraska	FA-23	D6-TB-20
97 Edwards Jr., Mario	DE	6-3	280	9	Florida State	FA-Sea-24	D2-LV-15
91 Fatukasi, Folorunso	DT	6-4	318	6	Connecticut	FA-Jac-24	D6b-NYJ-18
90 Gaye, Ali	DE	6-6	262	1	LSU	FA-23	FA-Hou-23
93 Hinish, Kurt	DT	6-1	296	2	Notre Dame	FA-22	FA-Hou-22
92 Horton, Dylan	DE	6-4	275	1	TCU	D4-23	D4-Hou-23
55 Hunter, Danielle	DE	6-5	263	9	LSU	FA-Min-24	D3-Min-15
98 Settle, Tim	DT	6-3	313	6	Virginia Tech	FA-Buf-24	D5-Was-18

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
0 Al-Shaair, Azeez	LB	6-2	228	5	Florida Atlantic	FA-Ten-24	FA-SF-19
35 Hansen, Jake	LB	6-1	230	2	Illinois	FA-22	FA-Hou-22
48 Harris, Christian	LB	6-2	232	2	Alabama	D3-22	D3-Hou-22
56 Haynes, Marcus	LB	6-4	240	1	Old Dominion	FA-24	FA-Den-23
43 Hewitt, Neville	LB	6-2	234	9	Marshall	FA-23	FA-Mia-15
13 Phillips, Del'Shawn	LB	6-2	230	4	Illinois	FA-Bal-24	FA-Atl-19
Phillips, Jacob	LB	6-3	228	4	LSU	FA-Cle-24	D3b-Cle-20
39 To'oTo'o, Henry	LB	6-2	228	1	Alabama	D5-23	D5-Hou-23

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Boyd, Kris	CB	5-11	201	5	Texas	FA-23	D7-Min-19
30 Bryant, Myles	CB	5-9	192	4	Washington	FA-NE-24	FA-NE-20
4 Ford Jr., Mike	CB	6-0	195	6	SE Missouri State	FA-Cle-24	FA-Det-18
21 Henderson, C.J.	CB	6-1	205	4	Florida	FA-Car-24	D1-Jac-20
36 Hill, Brandon	S	5-11	195	1	Pittsburgh	D7-23	D7-Hou-23
32 Johnson Jr., Lonnie	CB	6-2	213	5	Kentucky	FA-NO-24	D2a-Hou-19
25 King II, Desmond	CB	5-10	201	7	Iowa	FA-Ten-21	D5-LAC-17
23 Murray, Eric	S	5-11	199	8	Minnesota	FA-Cle-20	D4b-KC-16
11 Okudah, Jeff	CB	6-1	205	4	Ohio State	FA-Atl-24	D1-Det-20
5 Pitre, Jalen	S	6-0	200	2	Baylor	D2a-22	D2a-Hou-22
28 Pride, Troy	CB	5-11	193	3	Notre Dame	FA-23	D4-Car-20
37 Ross, D'Angelo	CB	5-9	190	2	New Mexico	FA-22	FA-NE-19
29 Stewart, M.J.	S	5-11	205	6	North Carolina	FA-Cle-22	D2b-TB-18
24 Stingley Jr., Derek	CB	6-1	195	2	LSU	D1a-22	D1a-Hou-22
20 Ward, Jimmie	S	5-11	193	10	Northern Illinois	FA-SF-23	D1-SF-14

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
15 Fairbairn, Ka'imi	K	6-0	183	7	UCLA	FA-16	FA-Hou-16
6 Townsend, Tommy	P	6-1	191	4	Florida	FA-KC-24	FA-KC-20
46 Weeks, Jon	LS	5-10	242	14	Baylor	FA-10	FA-Hou-10

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	1	Stefon Diggs	19	Xavier Hutchinson
WR	12	Nico Collins	2	Robert Woods
WR	3	Tank Dell	85	Noah Brown
LT	78	Laremy Tunsil	67	Charlie Heck
LG	76	Kenyon Green	53	Kendrick Green
C	70	Juice Scruggs	68	Jarrett Patterson
RG	69	Shaq Mason		LaDarius Henderson (R)
RT	71	Tytus Howard		Blake Fisher (R)
TE	86	Dalton Schultz		Cade Stover (R)
QB	7	C.J. Stroud	10	Davis Mills
RB	28	Joe Mixon	31	Dameon Pierce

DEFENSE

DE	55	Danielle Hunter	96	Denico Autry
DT	98	Tim Settle	93	Kurt Hinish
DT	91	Foley Fatukasi	94	Khalil Davis
DE	51	Will Anderson Jr.	95	Derek Barnett
LB	48	Christian Harris	39	Henry To'oTo'o
LB	0	Azeez Al-Shaair	43	Neville Hewitt
CB	24	Derek Stingley Jr.	21	C.J. Henderson
CB		Kamari Lassiter (R)	11	Jeff Okudah
NB	25	Desmond King II	30	Myles Bryant
SS	20	Jimmie Ward	29	M.J. Stewart
FS	5	Jalen Pitre		Calen Bullock (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	15	Ka'imi Fairbairn	KR 31	Dameon Pierce
P	6	Tommy Townsend	PR 3	Tank Dell

16

Nico Collins led NFL wideouts with 16 broken tackles on receptions per Pro Football Reference.

TEXANS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
2.	Kamari Lassiter	CB	6-0	187	Georgia
2.	Blake Fisher	OT	6-6	310	Notre Dame
3.	Calen Bullock	S	6-2	188	USC
4.	Cade Stover	TE	6-4	247	Ohio State
6.	Jamal Hill	LB	6-0	216	Oregon
6.	Jawhar Jordan	RB	5-10	193	Louisville
7.	Solomon Byrd	EDGE	6-3	255	USC
7.	Marcus Harris	DT	6-2	286	Auburn
7.	LaDarius Henderson	OG	6-4	309	Michigan

General manager Nick Caserio drafted five defensive and four offensive players, none of whom is under pressure to start right away because the roster has improved substantially since DeMeco Ryans was hired last year. Cornerback Kamari Lassiter, who can play inside or outside, is the most likely draft pick to earn a starting job by the first game. Lassiter and Calen Bullock, who has the size, speed and range to earn playing time right away, should fortify the secondary. Blake Fisher was a surprise pick in the second round because offensive tackle isn't a position of need, so unless injuries force the 21-year-old into the lineup, he should use his rookie season as a learning experience. Cade Stover should compete for playing time opposite Dalton Schultz when the formation requires two tight ends.

IND COLTS

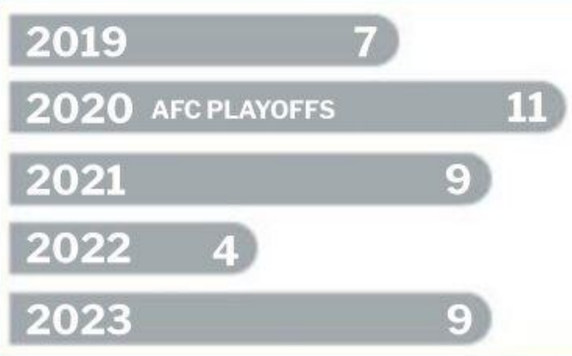
AFC SOUTH FORECAST 3

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	Houston	1:00
Sept. 15	at Green Bay	1:00
Sept. 22	Chicago	1:00
Sept. 29	Pittsburgh	1:00
Oct. 6	at Jacksonville	1:00
Oct. 13	at Tennessee	1:00
Oct. 20	Miami	1:00
Oct. 27	at Houston	1:00
Nov. 3	at Minnesota	1:00
Nov. 10	Buffalo	1:00
Nov. 17	at N.Y. Jets	8:20
Nov. 24	Detroit	1:00
Dec. 1	at New England	1:00
Dec. 8	BYE	
Dec. 15	at Denver	4:25
Dec. 22	Tennessee	1:00
Dec. 28	at N.Y. Giants	TBD
Jan. 4/5	Jacksonville	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Shane Steichen
Record With Team: 9-8
Career Record: 9-8
Offensive Coordinator: Jim Bob Cooter
Defensive Coordinator: Gus Bradley
Special Teams Coordinator: Brian Mason
Quarterbacks: Cam Turner
Running Backs: DeAndre Smith
Wide Receivers: Reggie Wayne
Tight Ends: Tom Manning
Offensive Line: Tony Sparano Jr.
Defensive Line: Charlie Partridge
Linebackers/Run Game Coordinator: Richard Smith
Defensive Backs: Ron Milus

While optimism always seems to abound when looking ahead to a new NFL season, Indianapolis Colts fans couldn't be blamed for skepticism. It's not just how last season ended — a dropped fourth-down pass in Houston territory to cost the Colts a playoff spot. No, it's the fact that the Colts haven't won the AFC South since 2014 and have one playoff win in that span.

And as far as offseason makeovers, the Colts didn't change much. General manager Chris Ballard re-signed most of his core players, including linebacker Zaire Franklin and wide receiver Michael Pittman Jr. He made just two free-agent splashes, the most notable being former Super Bowl MVP quarterback Joe Flacco, who becomes the new $5 million insurance policy for second-year franchise passer Anthony Richardson. The Colts then added a few potential impact players in the draft.

So why should anyone expect the Colts to make the playoffs for the first time since 2020? If nothing else, faith is placed in Ballard's belief that a 9-8 team coming so close to the postseason didn't need too much tinkering.

OFFENSE

Richardson, the prized first-round pick and anointed franchise savior, lasted four games as a rookie before needing shoulder surgery. He's healed and eager to prove his worth as a leader. There's no denying his physical skills, as a 6-foot-4, 244-pound talent with a strong arm and exceptional running ability. But pump the brakes on Lamar Jackson comparisons for now. He's 22 and has a lot to learn — first and foremost, how to avoid taking unnecessary hits when running. Second-year head coach Shane Steichen likes to call designed runs because of Richardson's ability, so it's up to the young player to realize the big picture of surviving to the next play. And as a passer, Richardson needs to improve his accuracy, specifically on touch throws.

Running back Jonathan Taylor returns healthy and happily compensated after missing seven games due to injury and a holdout. The 2021 NFL rushing champion is the ideal weapon to rely upon with a young quarterback.

An offensive line anchored by six-time Pro Bowl guard Quenton Nelson returns intact. Tackles Matt Goncalves and Tanor Bortolini, drafted in the third and fourth rounds, respectively, will prep inside and should push for snaps. Four-time Pro Bowl center Ryan Kelly is entering a contract year in his ninth season, and it's fair to question how much more he has in the tank. Right tackle Braden Smith has struggled to stay healthy with 16 missed starts in four years, including seven last year. He's good when he plays, but there's a reason Ballard drafted tackles who can play inside or out.

Two drafted wide receivers, including Texas speedster Adonai Mitchell in the second round, could solve the problem of being too reliant on Pittman. Second-year receiver Josh Downs proved to be a keeper with 68 receptions while averaging 11.3 yards per catch. But there was a big gap between the No. 2 and Pittman, who had 109 receptions for 1,152 yards. Former second-round pick Alec Pierce has made some big plays, but he has yet to show the necessary consistency, hence the Colts adding speed in the draft.

The return of a healthy tight end Jelani Woods, who missed all of last season, provides a big target for Richardson over the middle and in the end zone. Tight end Mo Alie-Cox hasn't lived up to his second contract, but he still makes splash plays at times.

ROBERT SCHEER/INDYSTAR

DEFENSE

Franklin wasn't the only defender who got paid. Nose tackle Grover Stewart, standout nickel Kenny Moore II and safety Julian Blackmon were among those who re-signed. And tackle DeForest Buckner got a two-year extension. Buckner is one of the NFL's best three-technique tackles and often demands double-teams. That is a more risky proposition with Stewart and new run-plugging tackle Rae-kwon Davis, formerly of Miami. The Colts' 4-3 should be stout against the run.

UCLA edge rusher Laiatu Latu was drafted 15th overall to boost a pass rush that ranked in the bottom third. He has the technical skills to make an immediate impact. Ends Samson Ebukam and Kwity Paye also bring pressure. Ebukam led the team with 9.5 sacks. Former first-round pick Paye had 8.5. He's developed into a decent player, but the team needs to see more from him. Franklin leads a group of fleet-footed linebackers. His 107 solo tackles ranked second in the league. E.J. Speed also topped the century mark in total stops in a career year.

The problem, as it's been for seemingly too long, is an inconsistent secondary that allows too many big plays and often couldn't get stops when it mattered most. It's the same group of mostly young hopefuls, aside from a couple of mid-round draftees. The Colts allowed an average of 32 points in five home losses. That's inexcusable. Second-year cover cornerback JuJu Brents showed promise in nine games when he wasn't hurt. The other outside slot is up for grabs. Blackmon is coming off his best season. The Colts will look at several options for the other safety spot, but Rodney Thomas II has been the most reliable the past two years.

SPECIALISTS

Kicker Matt Gay became the NFL's highest-paid player at his position when he signed last offseason. He was worth every penny early, especially in making NFL history with four field goals of 50-plus yards in an upset win at Baltimore. But a nagging hip injury affected his accuracy, which plummeted to 80.5 percent. He had averaged better than 93 percent the previous two years. Gay is healthy and is expected to return to previous elite form. Punter Rigoberto Sanchez re-signed for one year and is reliable. Sanchez also handles kickoff duties. Long snapper Luke Rhodes is one of the league's best. Fifth-round wide receiver Anthony Gould from Oregon State is an intriguing returner with blazing speed, although he's small in stature (5-8, 174).

FINAL ANALYSIS

The defending AFC South champion Texans look much stronger, which means the Colts need a lot of pieces to fall into place to end their title drought. At the very least, the Colts are capable of making the playoffs, presuming most of their key pieces stay on the field. That's said about every team, but it's especially true about the Colts, who don't have a lot of depth behind many of their leaders. Richardson and Taylor can make some serious noise. The defense should be better, although expect more shootouts.

Perhaps the bigger question is this: What good is making the playoffs if the Colts go one-and-done and don't show significant progress? This is a franchise that set a high standard during the Peyton Manning years with seven titles in the division's first 10 years. The Colts won one Super Bowl and lost another.

Owner Jim Irsay has always preached that his expectation for excellence is winning three consecutive Super Bowls. One has to wonder if Irsay's patience has worn thin with Ballard entering his eighth year. At some point, the boss can't be content with so-so results and a team that continually disappoints fans by not making the playoffs.

2023 RESULTS (9-8)

Sept. 10	Jacksonville	L	21-31
Sept. 17	at Houston	W	31-20
Sept. 24	at Baltimore (ot)	W	22-19
Oct. 1	L.A. Rams (ot)	L	23-29
Oct. 8	Tennessee	W	23-16
Oct. 15	at Jacksonville	L	20-37
Oct. 22	Cleveland	L	38-39
Oct. 29	New Orleans	L	27-38
Nov. 5	at Carolina	W	27-13
Nov. 12	New England	W	10-6
Nov. 26	Tampa Bay	W	27-20
Dec. 3	at Tennessee	W	31-28
Dec. 10	at Cincinnati	L	14-34
Dec. 17	Pittsburgh	W	30-13
Dec. 24	at Atlanta	L	10-29
Dec. 31	Las Vegas	W	23-20
Jan. 7	Houston	L	19-23

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	336.8	15	7
Rushing	121.1	10	4
Passing	215.6	20	9
Scoring	23.3	T10	T4
Third Down %	35.3	26	12
Points/Play	0.362	12	5

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	349.8	24	13
Rushing	123.8	24	13
Passing	226.0	16	9
Scoring	24.4	28	16
Interceptions	15	T14	T8
Sacks	51	5	5
Opp. Pts./Play	0.365	22	13
TO Differential	+2	T12	T6

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Gardner Minshew	490	305	3,305	15	9
Anthony Richardson	84	50	577	3	1

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Zack Moss	183	794	4.3	5
Jonathan Taylor	169	741	4.4	7

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Michael Pittman Jr.	109	1,152	10.6	4
Josh Downs	68	771	11.3	2
Alec Pierce	32	514	16.1	2
Kylen Granson	30	368	12.3	1
Zack Moss	27	192	7.1	2

KICKING: Matt Gay, 33-41 FGs, 35-36 PATs, 134 points
TACKLES: Zaire Franklin, 179; E.J. Speed, 100
SACKS: Samson Ebukam, 9.5; Kwity Paye, 8.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Julian Blackmon, 4; Kenny Moore II, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

MITCHELL RAISES EYEBROWS After being selected in the second round with the 52nd overall pick, Texas wide receiver **Adonai Mitchell** wasn't shy about expressing his disappointment about not being chosen earlier. It's not often that a drafted player is so blunt. "The only thing I'm feeling is I'm just kind of pissed," Mitchell said. "I don't really know what other way to call it."

TAKING CARE OF MOM After growing up in adverse circumstances, Colts quarterback Anthony Richardson took great pride in buying his hard-working mother, LaShawnda Lane, a new home in Indianapolis. "There's been times we had to sleep on the floor, not having enough food," Richardson says. "But not really complaining because my mom was grinding, trying to find a way for us, and I'm forever thankful for that because it taught me how to go hard and never take what you have for granted."

ROCKING THE MULLET Wisconsin offensive lineman Tanor Bortolini showed he was an amusing character after the Colts drafted him in the fourth round. In a video interview, Bortolini turned to show off his mullet, which was inspired by former Badgers teammate Joe Tippmann, a second-round pick of the New York Jets last year.

IRSAY ABSENT Colts owner Jim Irsay is usually a fixture in the draft room, but not this year, as he continues to recover from major surgery on his lower back area that has severely limited his mobility and kept him out of public view for months. Irsay denied his condition was due to an overdose, which was initially reported: "It wasn't an overdose," he said. "I don't know why when you have your name in the paper in the past, people throw that out there quickly. I don't pay attention to it all that much, but I don't think it's fair."

SCOUTING THE COLTS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP INDIANAPOLIS "Saw enough out of Anthony Richardson to understand he's a cross between Lamar Jackson and Cam Newton as a runner and has some real upside as a passer. If he played a full season, I think he would have been challenging C.J. Stroud for NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year. … Jonathan Taylor has his moments where he looks like he's worth every dollar of that big contract. He just needs to stay consistent and healthy. … Michael Pittman Jr. deserved that new contract. He's so tough to cover. … Quenton Nelson's reputation is better than his play right now. … This is an underachieving offensive line overall. … Having Joe Flacco back up Richardson was a smart move by GM Chris Ballard. … Alec Pierce isn't flashy, but, boy, is he good. … DeForest Buckner causes offensive lines all kinds of trouble. … Kwity Paye and Samson Ebukam bring a lot of heat off the edge. … Zaire Franklin is intelligent and tough inside. … Grant Stuard is a smaller 'backer, but he's gritty and can run. … I liked that they brought back Kenny Moore II. He's always around the football. … JuJu Brents struggled in single coverage in big games, getting beat by Nico Collins. He's long and fast and just needs more coaching. ... Matt Gay is a money kicker. "

AARON E. MARTINEZ/AMERICAN-STATESMAN

2024 COLTS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4 Ehlinger, Sam	QB	6-2	225	3	Texas	D6-21	D6-Ind-21
15 Flacco, Joe	QB	6-6	245	16	Delaware	FA-Cle-24	D1-Bal-08
5 Richardson, Anthony	QB	6-4	244	1	Florida	D1-23	D1-Ind-23
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
31 Goodson, Tyler	RB	5-9	197	1	Iowa	FA-23	FA-GB-22
26 Hull, Evan	RB	5-10	209	1	Northwestern	D5-23	D5-Ind-23
34 Scott, Zavier	RB	6-1	219	1	Maine	FA-23	FA-Ind-23
27 Sermon, Trey	RB	6-0	215	3	Ohio State	FA-23	D3-SF-21
28 Taylor, Jonathan	RB	5-10	226	4	Wisconsin	D2-20	D2-Ind-20
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
81 Alie-Cox, Mo	TE	6-5	267	6	VCU	FA-17	FA-Ind-17
13 Bynum, Terrell	WR	6-0	188	1	USC	FA-24	FA-LAC-23
15 Cleveland, Tyrie	WR	6-2	205	4	Florida	FA-23	D7a-Den-20
1 Downs, Josh	WR	5-9	171	1	North Carolina	D3-23	D3-Ind-23
16 Dulin, Ashton	WR	6-2	215	5	Malone	FA-19	FA-Ind-19
3 Fernea, Ethan	WR	6-0	195	1	UCLA	FA-22	FA-Ind-22
83 Granson, Kylen	TE	6-3	242	3	SMU	D4-21	D4-Ind-21
13 Hamler, KJ	WR	5-9	178	4	Penn State	FA-23	D2-Den-20
86 Mallory, Will	TE	6-4	239	1	Miami	D5-23	D5-Ind-23
2 Montgomery, D.J.	WR	6-1	201	2	Austin Peay	FA-23	FA-Cle-19
84 Murray, Jordan	TE	6-5	240	1	Hawaii	FA-23	FA-Hou-23
85 Ogletree, Drew	TE	6-5	260	2	Youngstown State	D6-22	D6-Ind-22
14 Pierce, Alec	WR	6-3	211	2	Cincinnati	D2-22	D2-Ind-22
11 Pittman Jr., Michael	WR	6-4	223	4	USC	D2-20	D2-Ind-20
49 Tomlinson, Eric	TE	6-6	263	7	UTEP	FA-24	FA-Phi-15
9 Winfree, Juwann	WR	6-1	210	3	Colorado	FA-23	D6-Den-19
80 Woods, Jelani	TE	6-7	253	2	Virginia	D3-22	D3-Ind-22
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
67 Anderson, Jack	C	6-4	314	3	Texas Tech	FA-23	D7-Buf-21
73 Freeland, Blake	T	6-7	302	1	BYU	D4-23	D4-Ind-23
62 French, Wesley	C	6-4	307	2	Western Michigan	FA-22	FA-Ind-22
75 Fries, Will	G	6-6	305	3	Penn State	D7-21	D7-Ind-21
64 Hambright, Arlington	G	6-5	300	2	Colorado	FA-22	D7a-Chi-20
78 Kelly, Ryan	C	6-4	307	8	Alabama	D1-16	D1-Ind-16
66 Kidd, Lewis	OL	6-6	311	1	Montana State	FA-24	FA-NO-22
56 Nelson, Quenton	G	6-5	330	6	Notre Dame	D1-18	D1-Ind-18
63 Pinter, Danny	G	6-4	301	4	Ball State	D5-20	D5-Ind-20
79 Raimann, Bernhard	T	6-6	303	2	Central Michigan	D3-22	D3-Ind-22
65 Sills, Josh	G	6-6	325	2	Oklahoma State	W-Phi-23	FA-Phi-22
72 Smith, Braden	T	6-6	312	6	Auburn	D2-18	D2-Ind-18
76 Witt, Jake	T	6-7	302	1	Northern Michigan	D7-23	D7-Ind-23
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
95 Adebawore, Adetomiwa	DT	6-2	282	1	Northwestern	D4-23	D4-Ind-23
92 Avery, Genard	DE	6-0	250	6	Memphis	FA-23	D5-Cle-18
96 Bryan, Taven	DT	6-4	291	6	Florida	FA-Cle-23	D1-Jac-18
99 Buckner, DeForest	DT	6-7	295	8	Oregon	T-SF-20	D1a-SF-16
98 Davis, Raekwon	DT	6-7	325	4	Alabama	FA-Mia-24	D2b-Mia-20
52 Ebukam, Samson	DE	6-3	245	7	Eastern Washington	FA-SF-23	D4b-LAR-17
93 Johnson II, Eric	DT	6-4	299	2	Missouri State	D5-22	D5-Ind-22
55 Land, Isaiah	DE	6-4	225	1	Florida A&M	W-Dal-23	FA-Dal-23
91 Leo, Titus	DE	6-3	245	1	Wagner	D6-23	D6-Ind-23
94 Lewis, Tyquan	DE	6-3	267	6	Ohio State	D2-18	D2-Ind-18
54 Odeyingbo, Dayo	DE	6-6	286	3	Vanderbilt	D2-21	D2-Ind-21
51 Paye, Kwity	DE	6-3	265	3	Michigan	D1-21	D1-Ind-21
58 Rivers, Derek	DE	6-5	250	7	Youngstown State	FA-23	D3-NE-17
90 Stewart, Grover	DT	6-4	314	7	Albany State	D4-17	D4-Ind-17
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
49 Ajiake, Austin	LB	6-1	223	1	UNLV	FA-23	FA-Den-23
47 Anderson, Liam	LB	6-3	226	1	Holy Cross	FA-23	FA-Ind-23
44 Franklin, Zaire	LB	6-0	235	6	Syracuse	D7-18	D7-Ind-18
48 Harrison Jr., Ronnie	LB	6-3	214	6	Alabama	FA-23	D3-Jac-18
59 McGrone, Cameron	LB	6-1	236	2	Michigan	FA-22	D5-NE-21
50 Olubi, Segun	LB	6-0	225	1	San Diego State	FA-22	FA-SF-22
45 Speed, E.J.	LB	6-4	227	5	Tarleton State	D5-19	D5-Ind-19
41 Stuard, Grant	LB	5-11	230	3	Houston	T-TB-22	D7b-TB-21
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
39 Baker Jr., Darrell	CB	6-1	190	1	Georgia Southern	FA-22	FA-Ari-22
32 Blackmon, Julian	S	6-0	202	4	Utah	D3-20	D3-Ind-20
29 Brents, JuJu	CB	6-3	198	1	Kansas State	D2-23	D2-Ind-23
36 Brooks, Kendell	S	6-0	200	1	Michigan State	FA-24	FA-Ari-23
20 Cross, Nick	S	6-0	212	2	Maryland	D3-22	D3-Ind-22
42 Dabo, Marcel	S	6-0	208	1	Stuttgart	FA-22	FA-Ind-22
43 Denbow, Trevor	S	5-10	208	2	SMU	FA-22	FA-Ind-22
33 Flowers, Dallis	CB	6-1	196	2	Pittsburg State	FA-22	FA-Ind-22
40 Jones, Jaylon	CB	6-2	203	1	Texas A&M	D7-23	D7-Ind-23
35 Lammons, Chris	CB	5-10	190	4	South Carolina	FA-23	FA-Atl-18
23 Moore II, Kenny	CB	5-9	190	7	Valdosta State	W-NE-17	FA-NE-17
31 Scott, Daniel	S	6-1	208	1	California	D5-23	D5-Ind-23
37 Speed, Ameer	CB	6-3	215	1	Michigan State	W-NE-23	D6-NE-23
37 Taylor-Stuart, Isaac	CB	6-2	200	2	USC	FA-23	FA-Dal-22
25 Thomas II, Rodney	S	6-1	196	2	Yale	D7-22	D7-Ind-22
38 Tutsie, Michael	S	5-10	189	1	North Dakota State	FA-23	FA-Ind-23
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
7 Gay, Matt	K	6-0	232	5	Utah	FA-LAR-23	D5-TB-19
46 Rhodes, Luke	LS	6-2	238	7	William & Mary	FA-16	FA-TB-16
8 Sanchez, Rigoberto	P	6-0	195	7	Hawaii	FA-17	FA-Ind-17

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	11	Michael Pittman Jr.	16	Ashton Dulin
WR		Adonai Mitchell (R)	14	Alec Pierce
WR	1	Josh Downs		Anthony Gould (R)
LT	79	Bernhard Raimann		Matt Goncalves (R)
LG	56	Quenton Nelson	63	Danny Pinter
C	78	Ryan Kelly	62	Wesley French
RG	75	Will Fries		Tanor Bortolini (R)
RT	72	Braden Smith	73	Blake Freeland
TE	80	Jelani Woods	81	Mo Alie-Cox
QB	5	Anthony Richardson	15	Joe Flacco
RB	28	Jonathan Taylor	26	Evan Hull

DEFENSE

DE	51	Kwity Paye	54	Dayo Odeyingbo
DT	99	DeForest Buckner	98	Raekwon Davis
NT	90	Grover Stewart	93	Eric Johnson II
DE	52	Samson Ebukam		Laiatu Latu (R)
SLB	48	Ronnie Harrison Jr.		Jaylon Carlies (R)
MLB	44	Zaire Franklin	50	Segun Olubi
WLB	45	E.J. Speed	41	Grant Stuard
CB	29	JuJu Brents	39	Darrell Baker Jr.
CB	23	Kenny Moore II	33	Dallis Flowers
SS	32	Julian Blackmon	31	Daniel Scott
FS	25	Rodney Thomas II	20	Nick Cross

SPECIALISTS

K	7	Matt Gay	KR	1	Josh Downs
P	8	Rigoberto Sanchez	PR		Anthony Gould (R)

2.7

Jonathan Taylor led the NFL with 2.7 yards after contact per attempt in 2023 per Pro Football Reference.

COLTS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Laiatu Latu	DE	6-5	265	UCLA
2.	Adonai Mitchell	WR	6-2	205	Texas
3.	Matt Goncalves	OG	6-6	317	Pittsburgh
4.	Tanor Bortolini	OG	6-4	303	Wisconsin
5.	Anthony Gould	WR	5-8	174	Oregon State
5.	Jaylon Carlies	LB	6-3	227	Missouri
5.	Jaylin Simpson	S	5-11	179	Auburn
6.	Micah Abraham	CB	5-10	185	Marshall
7.	Jonah Laulu	DT	6-5	292	Oklahoma

GM Chris Ballard was fortunate to draft Laiatu Latu as the first defensive player selected 15th overall. He tried to move up to snag an offensive player but settled for perhaps the most promising edge rusher. And Jonah Laulu could also make an immediate impact on an inconsistent pass rush that ranked in the bottom third. Adonai Mitchell fills a need in an offense too reliant on No. 1 receiver Michael Pittman Jr. And he's got a chip on his shoulder pad. He wasn't shy about expressing his dismay about lasting until the 52nd pick. Expect both Matt Goncalves and Tanor Bortolini to be groomed for starting spots, perhaps not this year but in 2025. Their selection signifies the need to improve the interior of the offensive line. Anthony Gould could be a game-changing return specialist.

JAGUARS

AFC SOUTH FORECAST

2

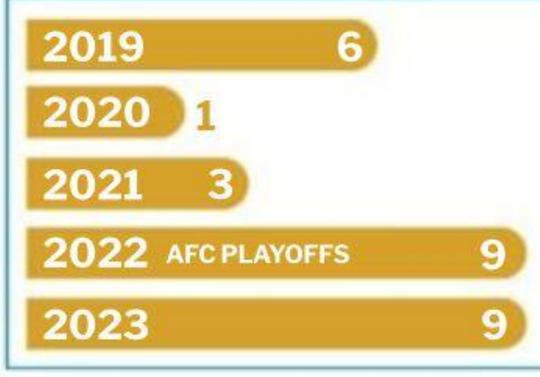
2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	at Miami	1:00
Sept. 15	Cleveland	1:00
Sept. 23	at Buffalo	7:30
Sept. 29	at Houston	1:00
Oct. 6	Indianapolis	1:00
Oct. 13	vs. Chicago*	9:30 a.m.
Oct. 20	vs. New England**	9:30 a.m.
Oct. 27	Green Bay	1:00
Nov. 3	at Philadelphia	8:20
Nov. 10	Minnesota	1:00
Nov. 17	at Detroit	1:00
Nov. 24	BYE	
Dec. 1	Houston	1:00
Dec. 8	at Tennessee	1:00
Dec. 15	N.Y. Jets	1:00
Dec. 22	at Las Vegas	4:25
Dec. 29	Tennessee	1:00
Jan. 4/5	at Indianapolis	TBD

*Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, London
**Wembley Stadium, London

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Doug Pederson
Record With Team: 18-16
Career Record: 60-53-1
Offensive Coordinator: Press Taylor
Defensive Coordinator: Ryan Nielsen
Special Teams Coordinator: Heath Farwell
Quarterbacks: Mike McCoy
Running Backs: Jerry Mack
Wide Receivers: Chad Hall
Tight Ends: Richard Angulo
Offensive Line/Run Game Coordinator: Phil Rauscher
Defensive Line: Jeremy Garrett
Inside Linebackers: Matt House
Outside Linebackers: Bill Shuey
Defensive Backs: Kris Richard
Cornerbacks: Cory Robinson

The past is the past, and that's fine with the Jacksonville Jaguars. But while the Jaguars very much want to put the late-season collapse that defined their 2023 season in their rearview mirror, head coach Doug Pederson has made clear that it will have a key role in 2024. Perhaps a big enough role to define the '24 season.

"I think it's fuel moving forward," Pederson said.

The Jaguars, after losing five of their last six games to miss the playoffs by a game, enter 2024 seeking a second postseason appearance in three seasons. They also enter it a very different team than they were the past two seasons.

This offseason was about major change. The team made personnel moves on the offensive line and at wide receiver. The defensive coaching staff is essentially all new, with change pretty much everywhere around a unit that started strong in 2023 only to fade along with the team's playoff hopes.

Key to the Jaguars returning to the postseason in 2024:

- Quarterback Trevor Lawrence must reduce turnovers and continue developing into the player he was expected to be when he was selected No. 1 overall in the 2021 NFL Draft.
- An offense that struggled to run in 2023 must improve.
- A defense that was among the NFL's best at forcing turnovers in recent seasons must continue to do so — and become stouter and more effective along the defensive line.

The Jaguars spent the offseason moving toward those objectives. How effective they are reaching them figures to define '24.

OFFENSE

Lawrence, the Jaguars' clear and unquestioned starter, must continue developing. Nothing will be more important to determining success or failure for the team in 2024.

Most important on this front: being healthy the entire season and reducing the turnovers that have been a theme throughout his three-year career. During a 16-game stretch from late in the 2022 season through the first part of 2023, Lawrence threw 29 touchdown passes with nine interceptions — and the Jaguars had a 13-3 regular-season record during that span. Beginning with a 2023 Week 13 loss to the Cincinnati Bengals, he left three of the Jaguars' final six games with injuries — and the Jaguars went 1-5 during that stretch, with Lawrence throwing seven touchdowns and seven interceptions.

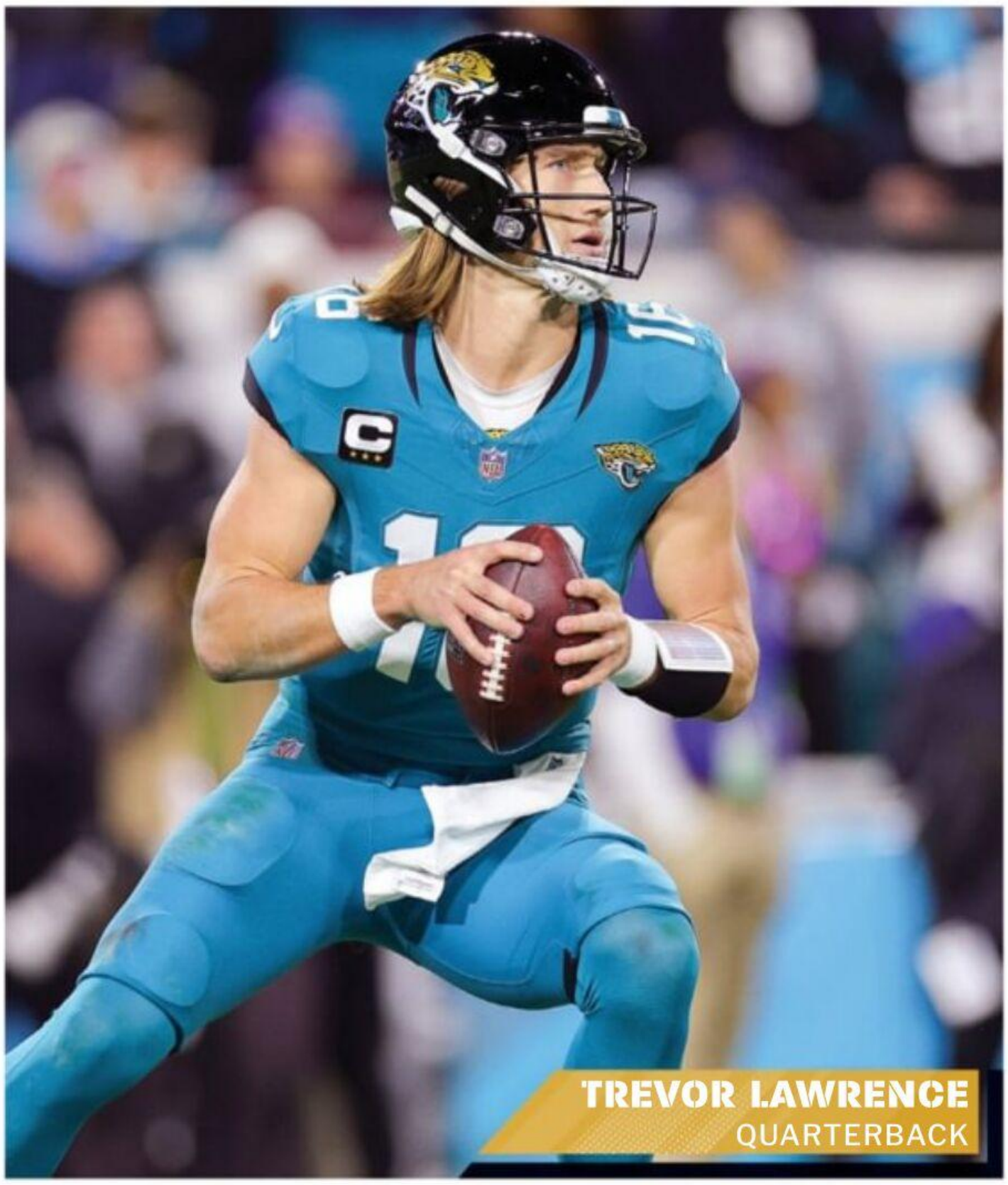
The turnovers that spiked during the late-season collapse have been a career-long issue for Lawrence. Through three seasons, he has 60 career turnovers, including an NFL-high 21 — 14 interceptions and seven lost fumbles — in 2023.

Pederson says that ball protection in the pocket — and the accompanying pocket/game awareness — will be an area of focus.

Also key for Lawrence: The improvement of a line that struggled at times in 2023, particularly with interior run-blocking. The Jaguars retained much of the line — left tackle Cam Robinson, right guard Brandon Scherff and right tackle Anton Harrison. Guard Ezra Cleveland, who re-signed after being acquired in a late-season trade with the Minnesota Vikings, and veteran center Mitch Morse, who signed as a free agent after his release from the Buffalo Bills, must foster improved run-blocking. Running back Travis Etienne Jr. rushed for more than 1,000 yards in 2023 largely because he broke enough long runs to offset the lack of consistent running lanes.

The Jaguars also will enter 2024 transitioning at receiver, with Calvin Ridley —

who led the team with eight touchdown catches in 2023 — having signed with the Tennessee Titans as an unrestricted free agent. Wideouts Gabe Davis (who played the past four seasons with Buffalo) and Christian Kirk pair with tight end Evan Engram to form a capable core. Rookie wide receiver Brian Thomas Jr., the No. 23 overall selection in the 2024 NFL Draft, figures to add a deep playmaking element to a veteran group. While this group lacks a true No. 1 receiver, Pederson's offense has proven in the past that it can flourish with three or four No. 2 complementary receivers. Health again will be key, with Kirk missing significant stretches in 2023.


TREVOR LAWRENCE
QUARTERBACK

NATHAN RAY SEEBECK-USA TODAY SPORTS

DEFENSE

This is the area of major change entering 2024, with the Jaguars hiring Ryan Nielsen — the Atlanta Falcons' defensive coordinator in 2023 — as coordinator and overhauling much of the defensive coaching staff in the offseason. Nielsen will bring the same aggressive, attacking approach he used to revamp the Falcons' defense last season, emphasizing press coverage in the secondary and a four-man rush along the front.

Edge defenders Josh Allen and Travon Walker give Nielsen a solid core around which to build, having led the NFL with 27.5 sacks as a duo in 2023. The Jaguars also made a major move to bolster an interior defense that struggled against the run late last season, signing defensive tackle Arik Armstead as a free agent after the 10-year veteran was released by the San Francisco 49ers this offseason.

The Jaguars need defensive tackle DaVon Hamilton to return to his 2022 form after a preseason back issue limited his effectiveness throughout the 2023 season, and they need a front that appears strong on paper to be far better. Second-round defensive tackle Maason Smith figures to bolster the interior with his length and size.

Also key: a secondary that will transition in style in 2024, with Nielsen and secondary coach Kris Richard expected to emphasize tight man-to-man coverage from the cornerbacks with safety help over the top. Cornerback Tyson Campbell must stay healthy after a hamstring injury limited him in 2023, with 10-year veteran Ronald Darby — signed as an unrestricted free agent — expected to play a key role and flourish in man coverage.

For two seasons under former coordinator Mike Caldwell, Jacksonville's defense was among the NFL's best at forcing turnovers. For the Jaguars to re-emerge as an AFC South contender, it must be stouter against the run and yield fewer explosive plays while finding players other than Walker and Allen to pressure the quarterback.

SPECIALISTS

The Jaguars revamped their special teams this offseason, allowing kicker Brandon McManus to sign as an unrestricted free agent with the Washington Commanders and selecting Arkansas kicker Cam Little in the sixth round of the draft. The team also signed All-Pro returner Devin Duvernay. Logan Cooke is one of the NFL's best punters, and long snapper Ross Matiscik was an All-Pro in 2023.

FINAL ANALYSIS

This is a huge season for this franchise — and for Lawrence. He and the team have shown strong flashes in recent seasons, winning the AFC South title in 2022 and leading the division by two games through three months last season. The storyline of 2024 will be whether Lawrence and the Jaguars are that team or the one that staggered to a 1-5 finish to miss the 2023 postseason.

If the moves that the team made to bolster the offensive and defensive lines, receiver and cornerback work, and this team stays healthy, it could be a contender. The addition of Nielsen also figures to make the defense a more aggressive, effective unit to complement what should be a potent offense. If Lawrence doesn't continue to improve, or if age or injury limit either line, pushing for the team's third consecutive winning season will prove difficult.

JAX

2023 RESULTS 9-8)

Sept.	10	at Indianapolis	W	31-21
Sept.	17	Kansas City	L	9-17
Sept.	24	Houston	L	17-37
Oct.	1	Atlanta	W	23-7
Oct.	8	Buffalo	W	25-20
Oct.	15	Indianapolis	W	37-20
Oct.	19	at New Orleans	W	31-24
Oct.	29	at Pittsburgh	W	20-10
Nov.	12	San Francisco	L	3-34
Nov.	19	Tennessee	W	34-14
Nov.	26	at Houston	W	24-21
Dec.	4	Cincinnati (ot)	L	31-34
Dec.	10	at Cleveland	L	27-31
Dec.	17	Baltimore	L	7-23
Dec.	24	at Tampa Bay	L	12-30
Dec.	31	Carolina	W	26-0
Jan.	7	at Tennessee	L	20-28

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	339.5	13	6
Rushing	96.8	24	12
Passing	242.7	9	5
Scoring	22.2	T13	T6
Third Down %	38.2	17	6
Points/Play	0.338	18	9

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	342.8	22	12
Rushing	103.1	9	4
Passing	239.8	26	14
Scoring	21.8	17	11
Interceptions	16	T11	T6
Sacks	40	25	15
Opp. Pts./Play	0.344	17	10
TO Differential	-3	T21	11

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Trevor Lawrence	564	370	4,016	21	14
C.J. Beathard	53	40	349	1	0

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Travis Etienne Jr.	267	1,008	3.8	11
Trevor Lawrence	70	339	4.8	4
Tank Bigsby	50	132	2.6	2
D'Ernest Johnson	41	108	2.6	0

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Evan Engram	114	963	8.4	4
Calvin Ridley	76	1,016	13.4	8
Travis Etienne Jr.	58	476	8.2	1
Christian Kirk	57	787	13.8	3
Zay Jones	34	321	9.4	2

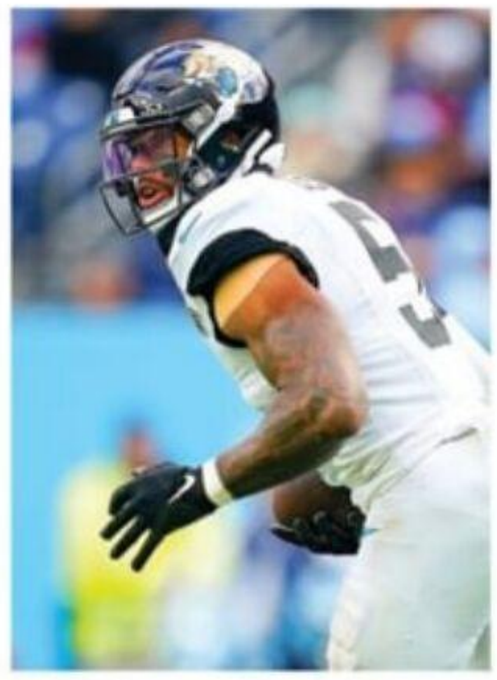
KICKING: Brandon McManus, 30-37 FGs, 35-35 PATs, 125 points
TACKLES: Foyesade Oluokun, 173; Devin Lloyd, 127
SACKS: Josh Allen, 17.5; Travon Walker, 10.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Andre Cisco, 4; Darious Williams, 4

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

HOMEWARD BOUND When Mac Jones was traded to the Jaguars in March, it was more than a chance for the former first-round selection to resurrect his career. It also represented a homecoming. The No. 15 overall selection by the New England Patriots in the 2021 NFL Draft, Jones is a Jacksonville native who played for perennial power Bolles High School. Following his introductory press conference, Jones said he had no need for an Uber or his own car. "It's kind of nice when your mom can pick you up from work," he said, laughing.

IT MEANS MORE The Southeastern Conference is considered college football's best conference. The Jaguars treated it as such in the 2024 NFL Draft, with six of nine selections from SEC schools. One other selection was from Texas, which will join the conference in 2024. Jaguars general manager Trent Baalke has selected 29 SEC players in his career, the most from any conference.

MAKE 'EM LAUGH Jaguars safety **Andre Cisco** is more than an NFL starter. He also has an interest in standup comedy — at least enough of an interest to perform on occasion in the offseason. "Making people laugh is harder than people think," he said. "I'm just a clown. I just play a lot. I love to make people laugh, like in any little setting."



YOUNG AND TALENTED Jaguars kicker Cam Little — the team's sixth-round selection this year — is the youngest kicker ever drafted in the NFL at just 20 years old. "I'm one of the youngest players to ever be drafted, but obviously kicker, I take the cake on that," he says. "I think that's pretty cool. Obviously, it has no comparing on how good I can be in the NFL. But I just thought that was a pretty cool little thing."

IRON MAN Offensive lineman Tyler Shatley has never been a full-time NFL starter. But he has been very important to the Jaguars' line — and extremely reliable. Shatley, who originally signed with Jacksonville as an undrafted free agent in 2014, has played in a franchise-record 140 consecutive games. He has started 51 of those games.

SCOUTING THE JAGUARS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP JACKSONVILLE "Trevor Lawrence has some really good wide receivers to throw to, and he can maintain his productivity even with Calvin Ridley gone. Between Christian Kirk, Gabe Davis, Brian Thomas Jr. and Evan Engram, Lawrence should have plenty of guys open that he can be confident they'll catch the football. … Cam Robinson is not a top-flight left tackle … All Travis Etienne Jr. does is make plays. He makes this game look easy. This offense is a bit too reliant on him, though. … Mitch Morse is really stout and smart at center. … Arik Armstead's addition is a big boost to the defense. Name someone who's had much success trying to block that guy. I'll wait. … Josh Allen earned that big deal. He made Laremy Tunsil look bad last season in one-on-one situations. … Foyesade Oluokun is quietly one of the better linebackers in the AFC. … Travon Walker's play and production doesn't quite match up with his size and mobility. … Not sure why Andre Cisco isn't in more conversations about the top safeties. He's really, really good. …. If I'm Doug Pederson, I worry about the matchups in this division and whether he's got the corners to hold up. Ronald Darby and Tyson Campbell don't inspire a ton of confidence. … Roy Robertson-Harris works extremely hard in the offseason on his pass-rushing moves, and it shows during the season."

ANDREW NELLES / THE TENNESSEAN

2024 JAGUARS VETERAN ROSTER

	QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3	Beathard, C.J.	QB	6-2	215	7	Iowa	FA-SF-21	D3b-SF-17
10	Jones, Mac	QB	6-3	220	3	Alabama	T-NE-24	D1-NE-21
16	Lawrence, Trevor	QB	6-6	220	3	Clemson	D1a-21	D1a-Jac-21

	RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4	Bigsby, Tank	RB	5-11	215	1	Auburn	D3-23	D3-Jac-23
1	Etienne Jr., Travis	RB	5-10	215	3	Clemson	D1b-21	D1b-Jac-21
25	Johnson, D'Ernest	RB	5-10	208	5	South Florida	FA-Cle-23	FA-Cle-19

	RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
14	Cooks, Elijah	WR	6-4	215	1	San Jose State	FA-23	FA-Jac-23
0	Davis, Gabe	WR	6-2	225	4	UCF	FA-Buf-24	D4-Buf-20
81	Deguara, Josiah	TE	6-2	238	4	Cincinnati	FA-GB-24	D3-GB-20
12	Duvernay, Devin	WR	5-11	202	4	Texas	FA-Bal-24	D3b-Bal-20
17	Engram, Evan	TE	6-3	240	7	Ole Miss	FA-NYG-22	D1-NYG-17
89	Farrell, Luke	TE	6-5	250	3	Ohio State	D5-21	D5-Jac-21
15	Jones, Tim	WR	6-1	200	2	Southern Miss	FA-21	FA-Jac-21
13	Kirk, Christian	WR	5-11	200	6	Texas A&M	FA-Ari-22	D2-Ari-18
87	Pederson, Josh	TE	6-5	235	1	ULM	FA-23	FA-SF-21
85	Strange, Brenton	TE	6-4	253	1	Penn State	D2-23	D2-Jac-23
11	Washington, Parker	WR	5-10	204	1	Penn State	D6a-23	D6a-Jac-23
18	Williams, Seth	WR	6-3	211	3	Auburn	FA-23	D6-Den-21

	OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
67	Brewer, Chandler	OL	6-6	320	4	Middle Tennessee	FA-23	FA-LAR-19
76	Cleveland, Ezra	OL	6-6	312	4	Boise State	T-Min-23	D2-Min-20
79	Fortner, Luke	OL	6-4	307	2	Kentucky	D3a-22	D3a-Jac-22
73	Hance, Blake	OL	6-5	310	3	Northwestern	FA-23	FA-Buf-19
77	Harrison, Anton	OL	6-4	315	1	Oklahoma	D1-23	D1-Jac-23
75	Hodges, Cooper	OL	6-4	305	1	App State	D7-23	D7-Jac-23
72	Little, Walker	OL	6-7	325	3	Stanford	D2b-21	D2b-Jac-21
65	Morse, Mitch	OL	6-6	305	9	Missouri	FA-Buf-24	D2-KC-15
74	Robinson, Cam	OL	6-6	335	7	Alabama	D2-17	D2-Jac-17
68	Scherff, Brandon	OL	6-5	315	9	Iowa	FA-Was-22	D1-Was-15
69	Shatley, Tyler	OL	6-3	305	10	Clemson	FA-14	FA-Jac-14
78	Sutherland, Keaton	OL	6-5	316	4	Texas A&M	FA-23	FA-Cin-19
70	Van Lanen, Cole	OL	6-5	312	3	Wisconsin	T-GB-22	D6a-GB-21
60	Williams, Darryl	OL	6-3	304	4	Mississippi State	FA-23	FA-KC-20

	DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
56	Abdullah, Yasir	DE	6-1	240	1	Louisville	D5a-23	D5a-Jac-23
41	Allen, Josh	DE	6-5	255	5	Kentucky	D1-19	D1-Jac-19
91	Armstead, Arik	DL	6-7	290	9	Oregon	FA-SF-24	D1-SF-15
54	Coleman, D.J.	DE	6-5	263	1	Missouri	FA-23	FA-Jac-23
47	Dixon, De'Shaan	DL	6-4	247	2	Norfolk State	FA-23	FA-Jac-22
50	Gipson, Trevis	DE	6-4	263	4	Tulsa	FA-Ten-24	D5-Chi-20
96	Gotsis, Adam	DL	6-4	290	8	Georgia Tech	FA-21	D2-Den-16
52	Hamilton, DaVon	DT	6-4	335	4	Ohio State	D3-20	D3-Jac-20
93	Lacy, Tyler	DL	6-4	279	1	Oklahoma State	D4b-23	D4b-Jac-23
99	Ledbetter, Jeremiah	DL	6-3	299	6	Arkansas	FA-21	D6-Det-17
97	Mondeaux, Henry	DL	6-4	280	5	Oregon	FA-NYG-23	FA-NO-18
92	Otomewo, Esezi	DL	6-5	282	2	Minnesota	FA-23	D5-Min-22
95	Robertson-Harris, Roy	DL	6-5	290	7	UTEP	FA-Chi-21	FA-Chi-16
44	Walker, Travon	DE	6-5	272	2	Georgia	D1a-22	D1a-Jac-22

	LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
55	Jackson, Dequan	LB	6-1	225	1	Colorado State	FA-23	FA-Jac-23
57	Johnson, Caleb	LB	6-2	220	3	Houston Baptist	W-Chi-22	FA-Chi-21
33	Lloyd, Devin	LB	6-3	235	2	Utah	D1b-22	D1b-Jac-22
51	Miller, Ventrell	LB	6-0	232	1	Florida	D4a-23	D4a-Jac-23
48	Muma, Chad	LB	6-3	239	2	Wyoming	D3b-22	D3b-Jac-22
23	Oluokun, Foyesade	LB	6-2	230	6	Yale	FA-Atl-22	D6b-Atl-18

	DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
21	Braswell, Christian	CB	5-11	185	1	Rutgers	D6b-23	D6b-Jac-23
30	Brown, Montaric	CB	6-0	190	2	Arkansas	D7-22	D7-Jac-22
29	Campbell, Tevaughn	CB	6-0	200	5	Regina	PS-LV-22	FA-NYJ-19
32	Campbell, Tyson	CB	6-1	195	3	Georgia	D2a-21	D2a-Jac-21
5	Cisco, Andre	S	6-0	210	3	Syracuse	D3-21	D3-Jac-21
25	Darby, Ronald	CB	5-11	193	9	Florida State	FA-Bal-24	D2-Buf-15
40	Hallett II, Erick	CB	5-11	190	1	Pittsburgh	D6c-23	D6c-Jac-23
26	Johnson, Antonio	S	6-2	198	1	Texas A&M	D5b-23	D5b-Jac-23
34	Junior, Gregory	CB	6-0	190	2	Ouachita Baptist	D6-22	D6-Jac-22
27	Oruwariye, Amani	CB	6-2	200	5	Penn State	FA-23	D5-Det-19
6	Savage, Darnell	S	5-11	198	5	Maryland	FA-GB-24	D1b-GB-19
20	Thomas, Daniel	S	5-10	215	4	Auburn	D5a-20	D5a-Jac-20
42	Wingard, Andrew	S	6-0	200	5	Wyoming	FA-19	FA-Jac-19

	SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
9	Cooke, Logan	P	6-5	230	6	Mississippi State	D7b-18	D7b-Jac-18
46	Matiscik, Ross	LS	6-0	240	4	Baylor	FA-20	FA-Jac-20
38	Patterson, Riley	K	6-0	190	3	Memphis	FA-24	FA-Min-21

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR		Brian Thomas Jr. (R)	15	Tim Jones
WR	0	Gabe Davis	12	Devin Duvernay
WR	13	Christian Kirk	11	Parker Washington
LT	74	Cam Robinson	72	Walker Little
LG	76	Ezra Cleveland	73	Blake Hance
C	65	Mitch Morse	79	Luke Fortner
RG	68	Brandon Scherff	75	Cooper Hodges
RT	77	Anton Harrison		Javon Foster (R)
TE	17	Evan Engram	89	Luke Farrell
QB	16	Trevor Lawrence	10	Mac Jones
RB	1	Travis Etienne Jr.	4	Tank Bigsby

DEFENSE

DE	44	Travon Walker	50	Trevis Gipson
DT	52	DaVon Hamilton		Maason Smith (R)
DT	91	Arik Armstead	95	Roy Robertson-Harris
DE	41	Josh Allen	56	Yasir Abdullah
LB	23	Foyesade Oluokun	48	Chad Muma
LB	33	Devin Lloyd	51	Ventrell Miller
CB	32	Tyson Campbell	30	Montaric Brown
CB	25	Ronald Darby		Jarrian Jones (R)
NB	6	Darnell Savage		Deantre Prince (R)
S	26	Antonio Johnson	42	Andrew Wingard
S	5	Andre Cisco	6	Darnell Savage

SPECIALISTS

K		Cam Little (R)	KR	12	Devin Duvernay
P	9	Logan Cooke	PR	12	Devin Duvernay

41.7

The percentage of the team's red-zone targets that the Jaguars spent on Calvin Ridley last year, which led the NFL. They'll have to find a new go-to receiver in the red zone.

JAGUARS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Brian Thomas Jr.	WR	6-4	205	LSU
2.	Maason Smith	DT	6-6	315	LSU
3.	Jarrian Jones	CB	6-0	191	Florida State
4.	Javon Foster	OT	6-5	319	Missouri
4.	Jordan Jefferson	DT	6-4	317	LSU
5.	Deantre Prince	CB	6-0	185	Ole Miss
5.	Keilan Robinson	RB	5-9	188	Texas
6.	Cam Little	K	6-2	179	Arkansas
7.	Myles Cole	Edge	6-6	280	Texas Tech

The key to the class figures to be Brian Thomas Jr., who many analysts believe can make a big-play impact as a rookie and develop into a potential No. 1 receiver in his second or third season. The Jaguars made significant moves to get bigger and stronger on the lines in the middle rounds, selecting LSU teammates Maason Smith and Jordan Jefferson in Rounds 2 and 4, respectively, and bolstering the swing tackle position with the fourth-round selection of the reliable Javon Foster. The NFL's new kickoff rules played a major role in the later rounds, with Keilan Robinson expected to play immediately as a returner and with Cam Little having the leg strength and accuracy to flourish.

TEN TITANS

AFC SOUTH FORECAST

4

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	at Chicago	1:00
Sept. 15	N.Y. Jets	1:00
Sept. 22	Green Bay	1:00
Sept. 30	at Miami	7:30
Oct. 6	BYE	
Oct. 13	Indianapolis	1:00
Oct. 20	at Buffalo	1:00
Oct. 27	at Detroit	1:00
Nov. 3	New England	1:00
Nov. 10	at L.A. Chargers	4:05
Nov. 17	Minnesota	1:00
Nov. 24	at Houston	1:00
Dec. 1	at Washington	1:00
Dec. 8	Jacksonville	1:00
Dec. 15	Cincinnati	1:00
Dec. 22	at Indianapolis	1:00
Dec. 29	at Jacksonville	1:00
Jan. 4/5	Houston	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Brian Callahan
Record With Team: First season
Career Record: First season
Offensive Coordinator: Nick Holz
Defensive Coordinator: Dennard Wilson
Special Teams: Colt Anderson
Quarterbacks: Bo Hardegree
Running Backs: Randy Jordan
Wide Receivers: Tyke Tolbert
Tight Ends: Justin Outten
Offensive Line: Bill Callahan
Defensive Line: Tracy Rocker
Linebackers: Frank Bush
Outside Linebackers: Ben Bloom
Passing Game Coordinator/CBs: Chris Harris
Secondary/Safeties: Steve Jackson

The Tennessee Titans come into 2024 following a massive overhaul. The team restructured its leadership — hiring Brian Callahan to replace Mike Vrabel as head coach, turning to first-time play-callers in Callahan and his defensive coordinator Dennard Wilson and adding a top-flight offensive line coach in Bill Callahan. The team has also moved on from lynchpin Derrick Henry, brought in seven veterans to be starters, drafted giants for both lines with its first two picks and ramped up its interest in analytics.

Multiple years of draft failures left a thin two-deep that was too much to repair in one year, but there is more than a skeleton in place now for the team to find out if strong-armed, quick-release second-year quarterback Will Levis is its man, and he will tell them if they are on the right track.

The Titans managed six wins in Vrabel's final season, and Vegas has set their over-under at 6.5. If Callahan is as bright as he seems, and the Titans can close on the Colts and Jaguars after a 1-5 division record in 2023, they certainly should challenge that number this season.

OFFENSE

Brian Callahan wants to open things up and talks of explosive plays and the value of players who score touchdowns.

To that end, the team shifted gears in free agency after some early plans didn't come to fruition and landed Calvin Ridley, likely the best receiver available and certainly the fastest, giving the Titans a big play-dynamic they've been lacking. He will take pressure off of DeAndre Hopkins, who's dangerous but gets open more with craftiness and an ability to pull balls in out of tight windows than with speed.

The Titans intended to move Hopkins and Ridley around. But the May signing of Tyler Boyd likely changes that to a degree. Boyd is a slot who knows Callahan's system and workflow. His presence puts Kyle Philips at risk and bumps sixth-rounder Jha'Quan Jackson into a change-up role. Treylon Burks, the 18th pick in 2022, was supposed to offset the loss of A.J. Brown in the terrible trade to Philadelphia. Burks has missed 12 games in his first two years and spent too many others working his way back from injuries. He also takes a while to get up to speed. He's fourth now and will need to prove a lot to earn snaps.

The offensive line has been a terrible unit for the last two years, starting with left tackle, where Dennis Daley took over for Taylor Lewan (knee) early in 2022 and Andre Dillard was signed to man the spot in 2023. Both were disasters. The Titans drafted Alabama's JC Latham seventh overall with the hope he can move from right to left under Bill Callahan's tutelage. Callahan helped Tyron Smith and Jedrick Wills make the same move in Dallas and Cleveland, respectively. Lloyd Cushenberry III was the best center on the market, and the Titans pounced on him quickly for a big-time upgrade. Expect the offensive line depth to be better prepared to step in and play thanks to the coaching upgrade.

Gone is the pound-it mentality that was Henry's M.O. The Titans will now use Tony Pollard and Tyjae Spears as a 1a and 1b combination in which both backs have similar skill sets. The presence of one in the huddle will do nothing to telegraph what sort of play is coming, as both are quality pass-catchers.

DEFENSE

If you want to understand the Titans' change in mindset and attitude, look to the cornerbacks. The Titans traded for L'Jarius Sneed and signed Chidobe

CHARLES LECLAIRE-USA TODAY SPORTS

Awuzie, and then they drafted Jarvis Brownlee Jr. to be their fourth corner. They will put an end to a long stretch of corners who gave receivers huge cushions for fear of getting beat over the top — cushions that didn't prevent the defense from giving up big plays. Incumbent nickelback Roger McCreary is also of a physical mindset. This group will get its hands on people, unafraid to test the officials' limits and draw some flags.

Tennessee is lacking on the edge and will miss Denico Autry and his versatility. He's now with the Texans. Harold Landry III is consistent, but Arden Key has been labeled as situational, and the depth behind the two is insufficient. The Titans hope their interior two can fluster quarterbacks, as Jeffery Simmons will now have giant second-rounder T'Vondre Sweat beside him. The Outland Trophy winner is a pocket-collapser.

Wilson will keep some principles of Vrabel's defense, which was especially good in the red zone. But expect more frequent blitzing, as the more talented secondary shouldn't need the big numbers of previous defensive incarnations, and a player like linebacker Kenneth Murray Jr. is better when unleashed for such things.

Fourth-rounder Cedric Gray could wear the green dot helmet and be an athletic key in the middle.

SPECIALISTS

Nick Folk settled down a team that had too much uncertainty at kicker for too long, and he kicked off better than expected after not doing the job for a while in New England. Ryan Stonehouse is a bomber at punter, but he suffered a nasty injury to his plant leg in early December, and his timetable for return is uncertain. If he's somehow not ready for the regular season, the punter who replaced him, Ty Zentner, is also on the roster.

Returner has been an issue, as Philips is an unreliable ball-handler and Kearis Jackson played only two games before he was hurt. So the rookie Jackson should have every chance to be the top guy.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Teams go from to first in NFL divisions every season. The Bengals and Chargers are more likely than the Titans to do it in 2024, but it's not out of the realm of possibility for Tennessee.

The team's president of football operations put it best in an interview with PaulKuharsky.com: "We hope we see the results on the field," Chad Brinker said. "It may not come right away. But if we believe in what we are doing and continue to work on our process, those results will come. Are they going to come in Year 1? We would love to see that happen. I don't know yet. There are so many new guys coming in. We've had quite a bit in free agency. We've got a whole draft class. We've got a new coaching staff. There is just a lot that had to jell and come together to really know."

Levis has an excellent arm and release. How his new coaches help him with accuracy and decision-making will be a huge storyline. If new strength and conditioning approaches mean it's a healthier team that doesn't need to call too much on depth, then you can ignore the national predictions that have them picking first in the 2025 draft and put them in the middle of the pack.

2023 RESULTS (6-11)

Sept.	10	at New Orleans	L	15-16
Sept.	17	L.A. Chargers (ot)	W	27-24
Sept.	24	at Cleveland	L	3-27
Oct.	1	Cincinnati	W	27-3
Oct.	8	at Indianapolis	L	16-23
Oct.	15	Baltimore	L	16-24
Oct.	29	Atlanta	W	28-23
Nov.	2	at Pittsburgh	L	16-20
Nov.	12	at Tampa Bay	L	6-20
Nov.	19	at Jacksonville	L	14-34
Nov.	26	Carolina	W	17-10
Dec.	3	Indianapolis (ot)	L	28-31
Dec.	11	at Miami	W	28-27
Dec.	17	Houston (ot)	L	16-19
Dec.	24	Seattle	L	17-20
Dec.	31	at Houston	L	3-26
Jan.	7	Jacksonville	W	28-20

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	289.0	28	14
Rushing	108.6	17	7
Passing	180.4	29	15
Scoring	17.9	28	14
Third Down %	33.5	28	13
Points/Play	0.304	26	13

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	335.1	18	10
Rushing	107.7	13	6
Passing	227.4	18	11
Scoring	21.6	16	10
Interceptions	6	32	16
Sacks	45	T15	12
Opp. Pts./Play	0.335	13	8
TO Differential	-6	T23	T12

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Will Levis	255	149	1,808	8	4
Ryan Tannehill	230	149	1,616	4	7

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Derrick Henry	280	1,167	4.2	12
Tyjae Spears	100	453	4.5	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
DeAndre Hopkins	75	1,057	14.1	7
Chigoziem Okonkwo	54	528	9.8	1
Tyjae Spears	52	385	7.4	1
N. Westbrook-Ikhine	28	370	13.2	3
Derrick Henry	28	214	7.6	0

KICKING: Nick Folk, 29-30 FGs, 28-30 PATs, 115 points
TACKLES: Azeez Al-Shaair, 163; Jack Gibbens, 92
SACKS: Denico Autry, 11.5; Harold Landry III, 10.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Sean Murphy-Bunting, 2; four tied with 1

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

TWO FOR ONE Derrick Henry took 93.2 percent of the Titans' regular-season carries from 2019 through 2023 (not counting the eight games he missed in 2021 after suffering a Jones fracture in Indianapolis). Now, Tony Pollard and Tyjae Spears will split the work. "As I see it right now they are both pretty interchangeable," head coach Brian Callahan said in the early spring. "But I do think there will be some definition of role as we get going, as you get the pads on and start playing. Those guys will probably separate themselves in some role or another that they really kind of sink their teeth into."

LEADERSHIP VOID Will Levis automatically has to lead as the team's quarterback. But beyond **DeAndre Hopkins**, where will leadership on offense come from? Free-agent additions Lloyd Cushenberry III and Tony Pollard are top candidates.

O-LINE SHOWDOWNS The Titans could have three-way battles for right guard and right tackle as head coach Bill Callahan teaches new guys and sorts through what he has. Daniel Brunskill is the incumbent right tackle, but is 21 pounds lighter than free-agent acquisition Saahdiq Charles. Dillon Radunz is also in the mix there. The right tackle candidates: Nicholas Petit-Frere, Jaelyn Duncan and Leroy Watson.

THE OTHER FOOTBALL Peter Skoronski is a fan of Tottenham Hotspur of the English Premier League. After playing for the Titans in their stadium last season in a loss to the Ravens in his rookie season, he returned in the spring and sat in the stands to watch them play in a match.

SPIRIT OF TOGETHERNESS Collaboration is the Titans' big buzzword as president of football operations Chad Brinker, general manager Ran Carthon and head coach Brian Callahan work together in the team's new leadership structure. When the team worked a trade with Kansas City for L'Jarius Sneed, it was Brinker who dealt with the Chiefs, using his pre-existing relationship with KC assistant GM Mike Borgonzi to the team's advantage.

SCOUTING THE TITANS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP TENNESSEE "Some of those leaks last year about Mike Vrabel allegedly dominating Ran Carthon on decisions and around the office were right on the money. From what I heard, the owner simply got tired of the situation and empowered Carthon by kicking out Vrabes. Ran is a real boss now in Nashville and doesn't have to walk around on eggshells anymore. … We're going to find out if Brian Callahan can coach up Will Levis and rein him in a bit. Levis has every physical tool, especially that cannon of an arm. He needs to work on the mental aspect and protect himself at times. … Love the Tony Pollard signing. With him and Tyjae Spears, this is a great running back tandem. … Signing Calvin Ridley gives them a real No. 1 wide receiver to take some pressure off of DeAndre Hopkins, who's showing some signs of age. … It's time to admit they missed on Treylon Burks. He's not quite in the bust category, but he's not a success story, either. … Carthon gets it. Draft and develop offensive linemen. Peter Skoronski last year and now JC Latham. Latham was one of my favorite players in the draft. … Worry a lot about T'Vondre Sweat. We took him off our draft board for red flags. There was more than just the DUI. There's reason to worry about that kid. … They're going to miss Azeez Al-Shaair's presence inside. Kenneth Murray Jr. was a disappointment for the Chargers. … L'Jarius Sneed upgrades the secondary significantly. In a division that's loaded with good quarterbacks, you need a cover guy like Sneed. Overall, it's a good secondary."

DENNY SIMMONS / THE TENNESSEAN

2024 TITANS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
8	Levis, Will	QB	6-4	229	1	Kentucky	D2-23	D2-Ten-23
11	Rudolph, Mason	QB	6-5	235	6	Oklahoma State	FA-Pit-24	D3a-Pit-18
7	Willis, Malik	QB	6-1	219	2	Liberty	D3b-22	D3b-Ten-22

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
36	Chestnut, Julius	RB	5-11	228	2	Sacred Heart	FA-22	FA-Ten-22
25	Haskins, Hassan	RB	6-2	228	2	Michigan	D4a-22	D4a-Ten-22
20	Pollard, Tony	RB	6-0	215	5	Memphis	FA-Dal-24	D4a-Dal-19
2	Spears, Tyjae	RB	5-11	195	1	Tulane	D3-23	D3-Ten-23

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
	Boyd, Tyler	WR	6-2	203	8	Pittsburgh	FA-Cin-24	D2-Cin-16
16	Burks, Treylon	WR	6-2	225	2	Arkansas	D1-22	D1-Ten-22
14	Dowell, Colton	WR	6-3	212	1	Tennessee-Martin	D7-23	D7-Ten-23
82	Harrison, Tre'Shaun	WR	5-11	188	1	Oregon State	FA-23	FA-Ten-23
10	Hopkins, DeAndre	WR	6-1	212	11	Clemson	FA-23	D1-Hou-13
5	Jackson, Kearis	WR	5-11	196	1	Georgia	FA-23	FA-Ten-23
12	Kinsey, Mason	WR	5-11	200	1	Berry College	FA-21	FA-Ten-20
89	Odukoya, Thomas	TE	6-6	253	1	Eastern Michigan	FA-22	FA-Ten-22
85	Okonkwo, Chigoziem	TE	6-3	238	2	Maryland	D4b-22	D4b-Ten-22
18	Philips, Kyle	WR	5-11	189	2	UCLA	D5-22	D5-Ten-22
0	Ridley, Calvin	WR	6-1	190	5	Alabama	FA-Jac-24	D1-Atl-18
80	Smith, Shi	WR	5-10	190	3	South Carolina	FA-23	D6-Car-21
	Vannett, Nick	TE	6-5	257	8	Ohio State	FA-LAC-24	D3b-NYG-16
15	Westbrook-Ikhine, Nick	WR	6-2	211	4	Indiana	FA-20	FA-Ten-20
81	Whyle, Josh	TE	6-7	248	1	Cincinnati	D5-23	D5-Ten-23

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
60	Brunskill, Daniel	OL	6-5	300	5	San Diego State	FA-SF-23	FA-Atl-17
53	Charles, Saahdiq	G/T	6-4	322	4	LSU	FA-Was-24	D4a-Was-20
79	Cushenberry III, Lloyd	C	6-4	315	4	LSU	FA-Den-24	D3b-Den-20
71	Duncan, Jaelyn	OL	6-6	306	1	Maryland	D6-23	D6-Ten-23
61	Ojukwu, John	OL	6-5	309	1	Boise State	FA-23	FA-Ten-23
78	Petit-Frere, Nicholas	OL	6-5	316	2	Ohio State	D3a-22	D3a-Ten-22
75	Radunz, Dillon	OL	6-6	301	3	North Dakota State	D2-21	D2-Ten-21
76	Rupcich, Andrew	OL	6-6	318	1	Culver-Stockton	FA-22	FA-Ten-22
73	Simmons, Lachavious	OL	6-5	315	3	Tennessee State	FA-23	D7-Chi-20
77	Skoronski, Peter	OL	6-4	313	1	Northwestern	D1-23	D1-Ten-23
	Watson IV, Leroy	T	6-5	310	1	UTSA	T-Cle-24	FA-Atl-22

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
97	Bohanna, Quinton	DL	6-4	360	3	Kentucky	FA-23	D6-Dal-21
91	Brown, Shakel	DT	6-3	295	1	Troy	FA-23	FA-Ten-23
91	Coburn, Keondre	DL	6-2	332	1	Texas	FA-23	D6-KC-23
92	Davidson, Marlon	DT	6-3	303	4	Auburn	FA-23	D4-Atl-20
69	Joseph-Day, Sebastian	DL	6-4	310	5	Rutgers	FA-SF-24	D6-LAR-18
96	McLendon Jr., TK	DE	6-4	275	1	Eastern Kentucky	FA-23	FA-Ten-23
98	Simmons, Jeffery	DT	6-4	305	5	Mississippi State	D1-19	D1-Ten-19

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
45	Campbell, Chance	LB	6-2	232	2	Ole Miss	D6b-22	D6b-Ten-22
47	Domann, JoJo	LB	6-1	230	2	Nebraska	FA-23	FA-Ind-22
50	Gibbens, Jack	LB	6-3	242	1	Minnesota	FA-22	FA-Ten-22
57	Gifford, Luke	LB	6-3	243	5	Nebraska	FA-Dal-23	FA-Dal-19
49	Key, Arden	OLB	6-5	240	6	LSU	FA-Jac-23	D3b-LV-18
58	Landry III, Harold	OLB	6-2	252	6	Boston College	D2-18	D2-Ten-18
42	Murphy, Caleb	OLB	6-3	254	1	Ferris State	FA-23	FA-Ten-23
56	Murray Jr., Kenneth	LB	6-2	241	4	Oklahoma	FA-LAC-24	D1b-LAC-20
41	Reese IV, Otis	LB	6-3	214	1	Ole Miss	FA-23	FA-Ten-23
48	Rush, Thomas	OLB	6-3	251	1	Minnesota	FA-23	FA-Ten-23
54	Wallow, Garret	LB	6-2	230	3	TCU	FA-23	D5-Hou-21
99	Weaver, Rashad	OLB	6-4	259	3	Pittsburgh	D4b-21	D4b-Ten-21

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
23	Avery, Tre	CB	5-11	181	2	Rutgers	FA-22	FA-Ten-22
13	Awuzie, Chidobe	CB	6-0	202	7	Colorado	FA-Cin-24	D2-Dal-17
44	Brown, Mike	S	6-1	215	1	Miami (OH)	PS-Cle-22	FA-Min-22
28	Carter, Shyheim	DB	5-10	194	1	Alabama	FA-22	FA-NYJ-20
3	Farley, Caleb	CB	6-2	197	3	Virginia Tech	D1-21	D1-Ten-21
33	Garror, Eric	DB	5-8	174	1	Louisiana	FA-23	FA-Ten-23
30	Gowan, Tay	DB	6-2	185	2	UCF	FA-23	D6-Ari-21
37	Hooker, Amani	S	5-11	210	5	Iowa	D4-19	D4-Ten-19
39	Jackson, Matthew	S	6-1	209	1	Eastern Kentucky	FA-23	FA-Ten-23
40	Kendall, Anthony	CB	5-10	188	1	Baldwin Wallace	FA-23	FA-Ten-23
21	McCreary, Roger	CB	5-11	190	2	Auburn	D2-22	D2-Ten-22
24	Molden, Elijah	DB	5-10	192	3	Washington	D3b-21	D3b-Ten-21
38	Sneed, L'Jarius	CB	6-1	192	4	Louisiana Tech	T-KC-24	D4-KC-20

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
46	Cox, Morgan	LS	6-4	233	14	Tennessee	FA-Bal-21	FA-Bal-10
6	Folk, Nick	K	6-1	225	16	Arizona	T-NE-23	D6-Dal-07
4	Stonehouse, Ryan	P	5-10	193	2	Colorado State	FA-22	FA-Ten-22
13	Zentner, Ty	P	6-2	199	1	Kansas State	FA-23	FA-Ten-23

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	0	Calvin Ridley	16	Treylon Burks
WR		Tyler Boyd	18	Kyle Philips
WR	10	DeAndre Hopkins	15	Nick Westbrook-Ikhine
LT		JC Latham (R)	61	John Ojukwu
LG	77	Peter Skoronski	76	Andrew Rupcich
C	79	Lloyd Cushenberry III	60	Daniel Brunskill
RG	60	Daniel Brunskill	75	Dillon Radunz
RT	78	Nicholas Petit-Frere	71	Jaelyn Duncan
TE	85	Chigoziem Okonkwo	81	Josh Whyle
QB	8	Will Levis	11	Mason Rudolph
RB	20	Tony Pollard	2	Tyjae Spears

DEFENSE

DE	69	Sebastian Joseph-Day	96	TK McLendon Jr.
NT		T'Vondre Sweat (R)	97	Quinton Bohanna
DT	98	Jeffery Simmons	91	Keondre Coburn
OLB	49	Arden Key	99	Rashad Weaver
ILB	56	Kenneth Murray Jr.	50	Jack Gibbens
ILB		Cedric Gray (R)	41	Otis Reese IV
OLB	58	Harold Landry III		Jaylen Harrell (R)
CB	13	Chidobe Awuzie	21	Roger McCreary
CB	38	L'Jarius Sneed		Jarvis Brownlee Jr. (R)
S	37	Amani Hooker	44	Mike Brown
S	24	Elijah Molden	28	Shyheim Carter

SPECIALISTS

K	6	Nick Folk	KR	Jha'Quan Jackson (R)
P	4	Ryan Stonehouse	PR	Jha'Quan Jackson (R)

10.6

Will Levis' 10.5 intended air yards per attempt led the NFL per NFL Next Gen Stats. Brian Callahan's two main quarterbacks in Cincinnati finished in the bottom five in lowest intended air yards per attempt in the NFL (6.5 for Joe Burrow, 6.3 for Jake Browning).

TITANS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	JC Latham	OT	6-6	342	Alabama
2.	T'Vondre Sweat	NT	6-4	362	Texas
4.	Cedric Gray	ILB	6-2	234	North Carolina
5.	Jarvis Brownlee Jr.	CB	5-10	194	Louisville
6.	Jha'Quan Jackson	WR	5-9	188	Tulane
7.	James Williams	LB	6-4	232	Miami (Fla.)
7.	Jaylen Harrell	OLB	6-4	247	Michigan

This draft class yielded three likely Week 1 starters and other early contributors. Tennessee drafted JC Latham in hopes of plugging him into the left tackle spot, a persistent problem for the franchise of late. The Titans had T'Vondre Sweat in for one of the 30 visits right after he was charged with a DUI, so they had a very good chance to dig into what unfolded and how he reacted to it. Later, they visited him and his family at their home in Huntsville, Texas, gaining an additional comfort level with him and discussing his weight and the financial consequences of him not staying below the proscribed number. If the draw of the Nashville party life doesn't get in the way, he can be a true force in the middle.

DEN BRONCOS

AFC WEST FORECAST

4

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	at Seattle	4:05
Sept. 15	Pittsburgh	4:25
Sept. 22	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Sept. 29	at N.Y. Jets	1:00
Oct. 6	Las Vegas	4:05
Oct. 13	L.A. Chargers	4:05
Oct. 17	at New Orleans	8:15
Oct. 27	Carolina	4:25
Nov. 3	at Baltimore	1:00
Nov. 10	at Kansas City	1:00
Nov. 17	Atlanta	4:05
Nov. 24	at Las Vegas	4:05
Dec. 2	Cleveland	8:15
Dec. 8	BYE	
Dec. 15	Indianapolis	4:25
Dec. 22	at L.A. Chargers	4:05
Dec. 28	at Cincinnati	TBD
Jan. 4/5	Kansas City	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Sean Payton
Record With Team: 8-9
Career Record: 160-98
Offensive Coordinator: Joe Lombardi
Defensive Coordinator: Vance Joseph
Special Teams Coordinator: Ben Kotwica
Passing Game Coordinator: John Morton
Quarterbacks: Davis Webb
Running Backs: Lou Ayeni
Wide Receivers: Keary Colbert
Tight Ends: Declan Doyle
Offensive Line: Zach Strief
Defensive Line: Jamar Cain
Inside Linebackers: Greg Manusky
Outside Linebackers: Michael Wilhoite
Defensive Pass Game Coordinator/ DBs: Jim Leonhard

Head coach Sean Payton placed a road sign on the Broncos practice field that reads "Compete Street," making it impossible for players to miss as they exit the locker room. It has served as a reminder that the Sesame Street days under former boss Nathaniel Hackett were over. Payton changed the culture, creating accountability and dramatically reducing injuries. However, the Broncos' three-win improvement left them with their noses pressed up against the playoff windowpane for the eighth consecutive year as the franchise posted its seventh straight losing season.

The Broncos insist they are not rebuilding, but this is a transition year after cutting All-Pro safety Justin Simmons, trading receiver Jerry Jeudy and, most notably, moving on from quarterback Russell Wilson. Payton preferred to absorb an $85 million dead cap hit on Wilson, $53 million this season, rather than coach the veteran. So, with his handpicked rookie quarterback Bo Nix, can he lead the Broncos back to relevance in the next two seasons?

OFFENSE

With Payton calling plays, the Broncos showed improvement offensively, but the 21 points per game fell short of expectations for a head coach who has routinely averaged 25 points during his career. Payton tried to blend his hyper-processing scheme with Wilson's ability to color outside the lines. The two never meshed, despite Wilson throwing 26 touchdowns with only eight interceptions. Payton admitted his offense wasn't good enough, pointing specifically to red-zone failures (20th) and goal-to-goal situations (worst in the league). He assigned much of this blame on Wilson, a sideline volcanic eruption in Detroit as evidence.

In Year 2, Payton's offense should look more similar to those in New Orleans. With Nix under center as a point guard and not a scrambler, look for a precision timing passing attack that stays on schedule, limits sacks and uses the middle-of-the-field and dig routes, completions that made Drew Brees a future Hall of Famer.

It should be set up by the run with four of five starters returning on the offensive line. When the Broncos were at their best last season, they leaned on a brutish ground attack, especially the blocking of mauling left guard Quinn Meinerz. Denver requires a new center — Lloyd Cushenberry III signed with the Titans — with veteran Sam Mustipher and practice squadder Alex Forsyth competing for the starting job. Improvement is needed after finishing 18th (106.5) in rushing yards per game. Javonte Williams made an inspiring recovery from an ACL injury, but never broke tackles like he did as a rookie and averaged 3.3 yards per carry over the final 10 games. It could lead to bullish rookie Audric Estime pushing for playing time with Samaje Perine's role increasingly uncertain. Second-year scatback Jaleel McLaughlin provides burst and is a third-down weapon, but he must play more not to become a tell when he's in the game.

Denver boasted one of the highest-paid receiving rooms the past three years with underwhelming production. Jeudy is gone, his big-play potential not enough to overlook his lack of interest when he wasn't the primary target. Pro Bowl returner Marvin Mims Jr.'s role will grow in his second season. He was criminally underused last season as the team stubbornly stuck with Jeudy. Can the addition of Troy Franklin, a burner, create more passing yardage on crossing routes that vanished under Wilson? The Broncos desperately need more pop in the middle of the field. Courtland Sutton is angling for a new contract — he has been fairly paid when looking at his production — after posting 10 touchdowns

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last season. The Broncos improved by their depth by re-signing Lil' Jordan Humphrey and adding the Lions' Josh Reynolds through free agency. Reynolds will be among their top four receivers and provides experience if Tim Patrick is unable to rebound after missing the past two seasons with knee and Achilles injuries.

For Payton's offense to hit its stride, it needs more production out of the tight end, where they ranked near the bottom in receiving yards. Lucas Krull showed flashes in practice and repeatedly drew unsolicited praise from Payton. Former third-round pick Greg Dulcich can no longer be counted on and will be on notice to make the team because of hamstring and foot injuries.

For Payton to reach the Hall of Fame, his legacy hinges on returning the Broncos to prominence over the next two seasons, with a potentially cleaner path now that he has his handpicked quarterback.

DEFENSE

Under new coordinator Vance Joseph, the Broncos made the type of startling transformation usually associated with Ozempic. The Broncos posted a five-game winning streak because their defense produced 16 takeaways. They led the NFL with 15 fumble recoveries. Repeating will be difficult. Simmons, a born ballhawk, was cut.

The Broncos will lean on three safeties who have all been part-time players to fortify the secondary in free-agent addition Brandon Jones, veteran P.J. Locke and oft-injured Caden Sterns. Cornerback Pat Surtain II remains the Broncos best player. He is too good for his own good. Teams rarely target him — he had one interception last season — and pick on the cornerback who lines up on the other side. Second-year pro Riley Moss will compete with veteran Levi Wallace for that starting job.

To address their leaky rush defense (137.1 yards per game, 30th overall), the Broncos revamped the line around Zach Allen and D.J. Jones. Allen brings relentless energy and an interior pass rush. The hope is that former Jet John Franklin-Myers' strength and former Saint Malcolm Roach's bulk will occupy blockers, freeing Jones to return to his elite run-stuffing ways.

At linebacker, the Broncos lost a leader in Josey Jewell, but the team believes it will be better with the tandem of Alex Singleton and Cody Barton, a proven tackler from Washington. Jonas Griffith could also push for playing time to improve the team's coverage of tight ends on first and second down.

The Broncos boast a solid group of edge rushers, but none is dominant. Denver hasn't had a player with double-digit sacks since 2018. They drafted an undersized pass-rush specialist Jonah Ellis, protecting themselves if Baron Browning leaves as a free agent. Jonathon Cooper can hold the edge, but Browning seems better cast as inside backer, and Nik Bonitto features the best first step but needs to continue to add to his arsenal of moves.

One thing to keep an eye on is the role of new defensive backs coach and passing game coordinator Jim Leonhard. If the Broncos get off to a slow start defensively, Joseph could be looking over his shoulder.

SPECIALISTS

The Broncos' most improved unit was special teams, a credit to coordinator Ben Kotwica and assistant head coach Mike Westoff. The Broncos ranked first in punt return average because of Mims and second in punt return average against, a credit to a well-devised scheme and younger reserves. Payton uses gained and lost yards to compute victories and will continue to stock better athletes on special teams — rookie Franklin could be an X-factor with the new kickoff rules. Former Saints kicker Wil Lutz delivered, offering an upgrade over Brandon McManus. Punter Riley Dixon was average, a disappointment in his return to altitude.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Payton is not patient. He will never say the Broncos are rebuilding, but their roster screams that they are. The key is leaving this season with an answer at quarterback. The team wants it to be Nix. But the reclamation of Zach Wilson would qualify as well. Payton's fingerprints are all over on this team with all the former Saints on the roster and the much-needed discipline. Now, the clock has started on the coach. He was never comfortable with Russell Wilson. At the end of the 2025 season, with his quarterback in place, the expectation is that the Broncos will morph into a legitimate contender. That will not happen without the offense finding its identity under Payton over the next two seasons.

DEN

2023 RESULTS (8-9)

Sept. 10	Las Vegas	L	16-17
Sept. 17	Washington	L	33-35
Sept. 24	at Miami	L	20-70
Oct. 1	at Chicago	W	31-28
Oct. 8	N.Y. Jets	L	21-31
Oct. 12	at Kansas City	L	8-19
Oct. 22	Green Bay	W	19-17
Oct. 29	Kansas City	W	24-9
Nov. 13	at Buffalo	W	24-22
Nov. 19	Minnesota	W	21-20
Nov. 26	Cleveland	W	29-12
Dec. 3	at Houston	L	17-22
Dec. 10	at L.A. Chargers	W	24-7
Dec. 17	at Detroit	L	17-42
Dec. 24	New England	L	23-26
Dec. 31	L.A. Chargers	W	16-9
Jan. 7	at Las Vegas	L	14-27

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	298.4	26	12
Rushing	106.5	18	8
Passing	191.9	24	12
Scoring	21.0	19	10
Third Down %	36.8	21	9
Points/Play	0.351	14	6

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	370.8	29	15
Rushing	137.1	30	16
Passing	233.6	22	12
Scoring	24.3	27	15
Interceptions	11	T19	12
Sacks	42	T21	14
Opp. Pts./Play	0.381	26	15
TO Differential	+4	10	5

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Russell Wilson	447	297	3,070	26	8
Jarrett Stidham	66	40	496	2	1

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Javonte Williams	217	774	3.6	3
Jaleel McLaughlin	76	410	5.4	1
Russell Wilson	80	341	4.3	3
Samaje Perine	53	238	4.5	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Courtland Sutton	59	772	13.1	10
Jerry Jeudy	54	758	14.0	2
Samaje Perine	50	455	9.1	0
Javonte Williams	47	228	4.9	2
Jaleel McLaughlin	31	160	5.2	2

KICKING: Wil Lutz, 30-34 FGs, 29-31 PATs, 119 points
TACKLES: Alex Singleton, 175; Josey Jewell, 108
SACKS: Jonathon Cooper, 8.5; Nik Bonitto, 8.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Justin Simmons, 3; Kareem Jackson, 2; Ja'Quan McMillian, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

STRESS TEST Broncos head coach **Sean Payton** expressed confidence in his ability to evaluate and vet quarterbacks in the draft. An important element to Payton is how a player functions as a learner. He would send a boatload of information as close to the meeting with a prospect as possible and see if there was a limit to what was learned. "Where is the breaking point? Is there one?" Payton said.

BLITZ HAPPY New Broncos safety Brandon Jones grew up fast, competing in sprints and relays at Nacogdoches High School in Texas. It shows up in his ability to blitz. He has eight career sacks, which should make him an interesting weapon for defensive coordinator Vance Joseph, who reintroduced the safety blitz with P.J. Locke last season.

QB OR NOT QB? Payton understands the frustration of Broncos Country with the revolving door at quarterback. The Broncos have used 13 starters since Peyton Manning. Only two produced a winning record — Trevor Siemian (13-11) and Brett Rypien (2-1). "I saw the humorous meme, and there's a Broncos fan with a shirt on and there were like eight quarterback names with a cross through it. It's our job to make sure that this next one doesn't have a line through it," Payton says.

PENNER ACCOUNTABLE CEO and owner Greg Penner has received a crash course in how much Broncos Country cares over the past two seasons. And he's fine with it. "If you look at every member of our ownership group, everybody's got that competitive fire. And we knew coming in what the standards and expectations are given the history of the franchise. We embrace that. We are not making any excuses, and the fact that the fans look at us with a critical eye, that's what you want. At the end of the day, the (fans) should be holding us accountable," Penner says.

BY THE NUMBERS Zero. That is how many 1,000-yard rushers and receivers the Broncos have had since 2019.

SCOUTING THE BRONCOS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP DENVER "Sean Payton has a sound plan for developing Bo Nix. He's definitely a system quarterback and a bit of a know-it-all, but we thought the kid was smart and coachable. I could see Payton and Nix being a really strong personality and scheme fit. … Jarrett Stidham is a decent backup … Javonte Williams has some real wiggle and decent power. … Courtland Sutton wound up sticking in Denver after a ton of trade rumors. Some of them have been true over the past two years. … Marvin Mims Jr. was a great pick last year. He really lived up to the hype. … Mike McGlinchey is a bit overpaid, but not a bad right tackle. It's just a more expensive position now when you're paying top-of-the market money. … Seeing some decline from Garett Bolles. … Smart trade for John Franklin-Myers. He'll come in with a chip on his shoulder and get after the quarterback. … The D.J. Jones move has worked out well so far. … Not too shabby at linebacker. No big names, but a lot of good players. … Pat Surtain II is on the short list of best corners. … Brandon Jones gives the Broncos some size and speed at safety."

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2024 BRONCOS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4 Stidham, Jarrett	QB	6-3	215	5	Auburn	FA-LV-23	D4b-NE-19
10 Wilson, Zach	QB	6-2	209	3	BYU	T-NYJ-24	D1a-NYJ-21

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
36 Badie, Tyler	RB	5-8	194	2	Missouri	PS-Bal-22	D6-Bal-22
20 Burton, Michael	FB	5-11	242	9	Rutgers	FA-KC-23	D5-Det-15
38 McLaughlin, Jaleel	RB	5-9	183	1	Youngstown State	FA-23	FA-Den-23
25 Perine, Samaje	RB	5-11	235	7	Oklahoma	FA-Cin-23	D4a-Was-17
33 Williams, Javonte	RB	5-10	220	3	North Carolina	D2-21	D2-Den-21

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
45 Adkins, Nate	TE	6-3	252	1	South Carolina	FA-23	FA-Den-23
83 Bandy, Michael	WR	5-10	190	3	San Diego	FA-LAC-23	FA-LAC-21
13 Dorsett II, Phillip	WR	5-10	192	9	Miami	FA-23	D1-Ind-15
80 Dulcich, Greg	TE	6-4	245	2	UCLA	D3-22	D3-Den-22
17 Humphrey, Lil'Jordan	WR	6-4	225	5	Texas	FA-23	FA-NO-19
89 Johnson, Brandon	WR	6-2	195	2	UCF	FA-22	FA-Den-22
85 Krull, Lucas	TE	6-6	260	2	Pittsburgh	FA-23	FA-NO-22
19 Mims Jr., Marvin	WR	5-11	184	1	Oklahoma	D2-23	D2-Den-23
12 Patrick, Tim	WR	6-4	212	6	Utah	FA-17	FA-Bal-17
13 Reynolds, Josh	WR	6-3	194	7	Texas A&M	FA-Det-24	D4a-LAR-17
87 Sills V, David	WR	6-3	211	4	West Virginia	FA-23	FA-Buf-19
14 Sutton, Courtland	WR	6-4	216	6	SMU	D2-18	D2-Den-18
82 Trautman, Adam	TE	6-5	253	4	Dayton	T-NO-23	D3b-NO-20
15 Virgil, Jalen	WR	6-1	210	2	App State	FA-22	FA-Den-22

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
75 Bailey, Quinn	T	6-6	323	5	Arizona State	FA-19	FA-Den-19
72 Bolles, Garett	T	6-5	300	7	Utah	D1-17	D1-Den-17
54 Forsyth, Alex	C	6-4	312	1	Oregon	D7-23	D7-Den-23
71 Jacobs, Demontrey	T	6-6	315	1	South Florida	FA-23	FA-Den-23
69 McGlinchey, Mike	T	6-8	310	6	Notre Dame	FA-SF-23	D1-SF-18
77 Meinerz, Quinn	G	6-3	320	3	Wisc.-Whitewater	D3a-21	D3a-Den-21
61 Mustipher, Sam	C	6-2	332	4	Notre Dame	FA-Bal-24	FA-Chi-19
63 Palczewski, Alex	T	6-6	315	1	Illinois	FA-23	FA-Den-23
79 Peart, Matt	T	6-7	315	4	Connecticut	FA-NYG-24	D3-NYG-20
74 Powers, Ben	G	6-4	338	5	Oklahoma	FA-Bal-23	D4b-Bal-19
78 Sherman, Will	G	6-4	300	3	Colorado	FA-22	D6-NE-21
76 Throckmorton, Calvin	OL	6-5	311	3	Oregon	FA-Ten-24	FA-NO-20
60 Wattenberg, Luke	C	6-5	300	2	Washington	D5c-22	D5c-Den-22

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
99 Allen, Zach	DE	6-4	281	5	Boston College	FA-Ari-23	D3-Ari-19
94 Blackson, Angelo	DT	6-4	319	6	Auburn	FA-Jac-24	D4-Ten-15
Franklin-Myers, John	DL	6-4	288	6	Stephen F. Austin	T-NYJ-24	D4-LAR-18
95 Garcia, Elijah	DL	6-5	302	2	Rice	PS-LAR-22	FA-LAR-22
91 Henningsen, Matt	DE	6-3	291	2	Wisconsin	D6-22	D6-Den-22
90 Jackson, Jordan	DL	6-5	285	1	Air Force	FA-23	D6-NO-22
93 Jones, D.J.	DT	6-0	305	7	Ole Miss	FA-SF-22	D6a-SF-17
92 Lawrence, Rashard	DT	6-2	326	4	LSU	FA-24	D4-Ari-20
97 Roach, Malcolm	DL	6-3	290	4	Texas	FA-NO-24	FA-NO-20
96 Uwazurike, Eyioma	DL	6-6	320	2	Iowa State	D4b-22	D4b-Den-22

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
55 Barton, Cody	LB	6-2	237	5	Utah	FA-Was-24	D3-Sea-19
42 Bonitto, Nik	OLB	6-3	240	2	Oklahoma	D2-22	D2-Den-22
56 Browning, Baron	OLB	6-3	240	3	Ohio State	D3b-21	D3b-Den-21
0 Cooper, Jonathon	OLB	6-4	257	3	Ohio State	D7b-21	D7b-Den-21
50 Griffith, Jonas	ILB	6-4	250	3	Indiana State	T-SF-21	FA-SF-20
59 Incoom, Thomas	OLB	6-4	265	1	Central Michigan	FA-23	FA-Den-23
53 Nchami, Durell	LB	6-4	260	1	Maryland	FA-23	FA-Den-23
51 Perkins, Ronnie	OLB	6-3	250	3	Oklahoma	FA-23	D3-NE-21
41 Sanders, Drew	ILB	6-5	233	1	Arkansas	D3a-23	D3a-Den-23
49 Singleton, Alex	ILB	6-2	240	5	Montana State	FA-Phi-22	FA-Sea-15
40 Strnad, Justin	ILB	6-3	235	4	Wake Forest	D5-20	D5-Den-20

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
28 Green, Art	CB	6-2	200	1	Houston	FA-23	FA-Den-23
22 Jones, Brandon	S	6-1	190	4	Texas	FA-Mia-24	D3-Mia-20
26 Key, Devon	S	6-0	208	1	Western Kentucky	FA-22	FA-KC-21
6 Locke, P.J.	S	5-10	202	4	Texas	FA-19	FA-Pit-19
27 Mathis, Damarri	CB	5-11	195	2	Pittsburgh	D4a-22	D4a-Den-22
29 McMillian, Ja'Quan	CB	5-10	183	2	East Carolina	FA-22	FA-Den-22
21 Moss, Riley	CB	6-1	193	1	Iowa	D3b-23	D3b-Den-23
34 Skinner, JL	S	6-4	220	1	Boise State	D6-23	D6-Den-23
43 Smith, Keidron	DB	6-2	201	1	Kentucky	FA-23	FA-Mia-23
1 Smith, Tremon	CB	5-11	190	6	Central Arkansas	FA-Hou-23	D6-KC-18
30 Sterns, Caden	S	6-1	207	3	Texas	D5a-21	D5a-Den-21
2 Surtain II, Pat	CB	6-2	202	3	Alabama	D1-21	D1-Den-21
35 Taylor, Reese	CB	5-10	188	1	Purdue	FA-23	FA-KC-23
32 Turner-Yell, Delarrin	S	5-11	200	2	Oklahoma	D5a-22	D5a-Den-22
39 Wallace, Levi	CB	6-0	179	6	Alabama	FA-Pit-24	FA-Buf-18

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
9 Dixon, Riley	P	6-4	221	8	Syracuse	FA-LAR-23	D7-Den-16
48 Fraboni, Mitchell	LS	6-2	223	2	Arizona State	FA-22	FA-Hou-21
3 Lutz, Wil	K	5-11	184	8	Georgia State	T-NO-23	FA-Bal-16

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	14	Courtland Sutton	89	Brandon Johnson
WR	19	Marvin Mims Jr.	17	Lil' Jordan Humphrey
WR	13	Josh Reynolds	12	Tim Patrick
LT	72	Garett Bolles	63	Alex Palczewski
LG	74	Ben Powers	76	Calvin Throckmorton
C	54	Alex Forsyth	61	Sam Mustipher
RG	77	Quinn Meinerz	75	Quinn Bailey
RT	69	Mike McGlinchey	79	Matt Peart
TE	85	Lucas Krull	80	Greg Dulcich
QB		Bo Nix (R)	10	Zach Wilson
RB	33	Javonte Williams		Audric Estime (R)

DEFENSE

DE	99	Zach Allen	91	Matt Henningsen
NT	93	D.J. Jones	92	Rashard Lawrence
DE		John Franklin-Myers	97	Malcolm Roach
OLB	0	Jonathon Cooper		Jonah Elliss (R)
ILB	49	Alex Singleton	50	Jonas Griffith
ILB	55	Cody Barton	41	Drew Sanders
OLB	5	Baron Browning	42	Nik Bonitto
CB	39	Levi Wallace	21	Riley Moss
CB	2	Pat Surtain II	27	Damarri Mathis
NB	29	Ja'Quan McMillian		Kris Abrams-Draine (R)
SS	6	P.J. Locke	34	JL Skinner
FS	22	Brandon Jones	23	Caden Sterns

SPECIALISTS

K	3	Wil Lutz	KR		Troy Franklin (R)
P	9	Riley Dixon	PR	19	Marvin Mims Jr.

5.0

Denver's 5.0 rushing yards allowed per attempt was the worst in the NFL.

BRONCOS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Bo Nix	QB	6-2	217	Oregon
3.	Jonah Ellis	Edge	6-2	246	Utah
4.	Troy Franklin	WR	6-3	180	Oregon
5.	Kris Abrams-Draine	CB	5-11	178	Missouri
5.	Audric Estime	RB	5-11	227	Notre Dame
7.	Devaughn Vele	WR	6-5	210	Utah
7.	Nick Gargiulo	C	6-5	310	South Carolina

Head coach Sean Payton bet on himself by taking quarterback Bo Nix. While Nix is viewed as a low-ceiling starter by many scouts, it is on Payton to help him exceed expectations. It's clear he wants Nix comfortable as the Broncos selected a QB-WR duo from the same school in the same draft for the first time ever, trading up for speedy Troy Franklin. Franklin needs to add weight but is a potential playmaker. The addition of bullish running back Audric Estime also puts Javonte Williams on notice if he doesn't regain his rookie form. The Broncos continued to add to their cornerback room, with Kris Abrams-Draine potentially pushing for playing time in specialty packages. The Broncos' rookie class made zero impact beyond Marvin Mims Jr. last season. This class needs to change that

KC CHIEFS

AFC WEST FORECAST

1

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 5	Baltimore	8:20
Sept. 15	Cincinnati	4:25
Sept. 22	at Atlanta	8:20
Sept. 29	at L.A. Chargers	4:25
Oct. 7	New Orleans	8:15
Oct. 13	BYE	
Oct. 20	at San Francisco	4:25
Oct. 27	at Las Vegas	4:25
Nov. 4	Tampa Bay	8:15
Nov. 10	Denver	1:00
Nov. 17	at Buffalo	4:25
Nov. 24	at Carolina	1:00
Nov. 29	Las Vegas	3:00
Dec. 8	L.A. Chargers	8:20
Dec. 15	at Cleveland	1:00
Dec. 21	Houston	1:00
Dec. 25	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Jan. 4/5	at Denver	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

- 2019 SUPER BOWL RUNNER-UP — 12
- 2020 SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONS — 14
- 2021 AFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME — 12
- 2022 SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONS — 14
- 2023 SUPER BOWL CHAMPIONS — 11

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Andy Reid
Record With Team: 128-51
Career Record: 258-144-1
Offensive Coordinator: Matt Nagy
Defensive Coordinator: Steve Spagnuolo
Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator: Dave Toub
Quarterbacks: David Girardi
Pass Game Coordinator: Joe Bleymaier
Running Backs: Todd Pinkston
Wide Receivers: Connor Embree
Tight Ends: Tom Melvin
Offensive Line: Andy Heck
Defensive Line: Joe Cullen
Linebackers: Brendan Daly
Outside Linebackers: Ken Flajole
Defensive Backs: Dave Merritt
Safeties: Donald D'Alesio

It's three-peat or bust for the Chiefs, who have openly said as much since securing the NFL's first repeat in 19 seasons against San Francisco in Super Bowl LVIII. With three Lombardi trophies and a fourth Super Bowl appearance in the last five seasons, Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs are the NFL's baddest bullies, but the defense carried Kansas City much of last season as the offense searched for an identity. The Chiefs addressed the offense's lack of speed and explosiveness, remaking a receiving corps that led the NFL with 44 dropped passes, but the defense must replace two key contributors — cornerback L'Jarius Sneed (traded to Tennessee) and linebacker Willie Gay Jr. (signed with New Orleans).

The marriage of Andy Reid's imaginative, dynamic offense with Mahomes at the helm and Steve Spagnuolo's versatile, aggressive 4-3 defense led by game-wrecking tackle Chris Jones has been ideal. Kansas City cemented the NFL's newest dynasty last season and now has one aim — surpass them all and become the first franchise to win three straight Super Bowls.

OFFENSE

Mahomes is the NFL's quarterback gold standard with his playmaking, leadership and ability to elevate his teammates, but the offense needs to evolve. Since Mahomes became the starter in 2018, the Chiefs never finished worse than sixth in total yards or scoring offense — until last season, when they finished 15th in scoring (21.8 ppg) and ninth in total yards (351.3 ypg). Mahomes' favorite target, tight end Travis Kelce, failed to reach 1,000 yards last season for the first time since 2015 after missing the opener and sitting out the regular-season finale, but Kelce remains an elite weapon. He's a run-after-catch specialist who dominates the middle of the field and could have another monster year after the Chiefs revved up the offense with two field-stretching wide receivers.

It was a mistake to bank on Kadarius Toney as the WR1 last season, so Kansas City added Marquise "Hollywood" Brown via free agency (Arizona) and picked Texas speedster Xavier Worthy in the first round. Both additions can challenge defenses vertically with speed and horizontally in the screen game, unclogging the middle for Kelce and Rashee Rice, who grew into a reliable playmaker as he earned Mahomes' trust during his rookie season.

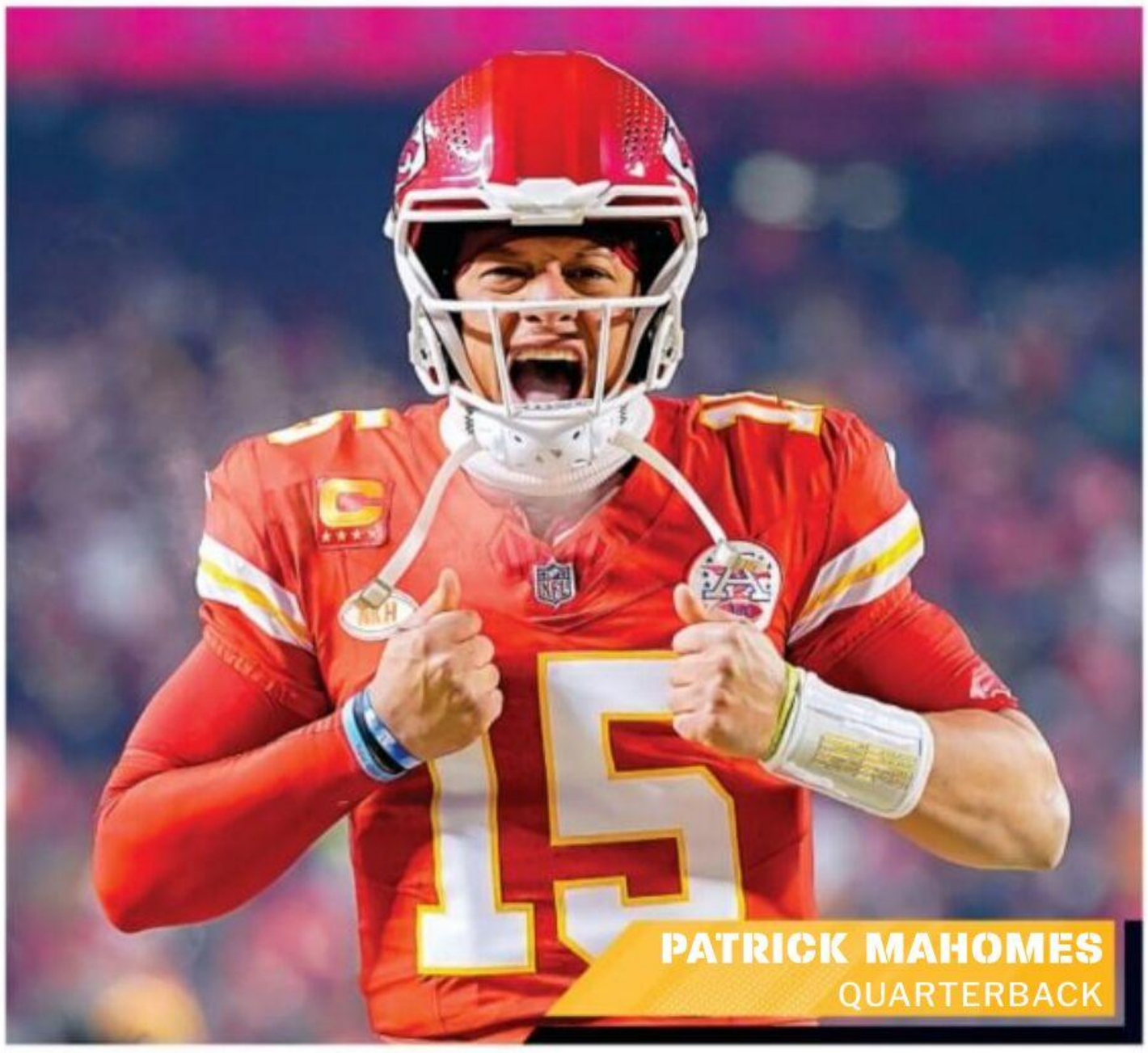
Kansas City's big-play offense will return in 2024 if Brown can come close to replicating his 2021 season in Baltimore (91 catches for 1,008 yards) and Worthy, who ran the fastest 40-yard dash in NFL Scouting Combine history (4.21), absorbs Reid's notoriously complicated scheme. But Worthy's durability — he's only 172 pounds — and Rice's legal issues — he faces eight charges from a multi-car, high-speed, hit-and-run injury crash he caused in March in Dallas — could derail the Chiefs' plans. Toney, Skyy Moore and Justin Watson are the projected second string.

In the backfield, Isiah Pacheco, a high-motor, hard-running back, brings swagger, and Clyde Edwards-Helaire, a beloved locker-room presence, returns on a one-year deal. They are serviceable and know the system, while the addition of Louis Rees-Zammit, a 23-year-old former rugby star from Wales, via the NFL's International Player Pathway Program provides an intriguing, hard-nosed addition.

Noah Gray, in a contract year, will serve as the second tight end with newcomer Irv Smith Jr. and fourth-round pick Jared Wiley (TCU) providing depth.

Up front, the Chiefs are a year away from a possible interior shakeup, but for now left guard Joe Thuney, center Creed Humphrey and right guard Trey Smith

are as good as it gets. Right tackle Jawaan Taylor settled in after a plague of early-season penalties, while left tackle is the offense's biggest question mark — a battle between second-year left tackle Wanya Morris and second-round pick Kingsley Suamataia (BYU) to protect Mahomes' blindside. Guard Mike Caliendo and fifth-round pick Hunter Nourzad provide depth inside, with Lucas Niang at tackle.



DEFENSE

After fielding one of the NFL's best defenses last season, Kansas City re-signed Jones, the best interior defensive lineman in the league with Aaron Donald's retirement, to a record contract extension, including $101 million guaranteed. Jones, who turns 30 this summer, matched Donald with an NFL-best 20 percent pass-rush win rate among defensive tackles despite seeing far more double-teams last season, according to ESPN analytics.

The rest of the tackle group — veterans Derrick Nnadi, a two-down space-eater, along with Tershawn Wharton and Mike Pennel — also re-signed along with end Mike Danna, an underrated, high-motor, versatile player who has increased his sack total each of his first four seasons. Opposite Danna, George Karlaftis hopes to build off a 10.5-sack sophomore campaign and continue his ascendance among the NFL's top young pass rushers. With Charles Omenihu probably unavailable to start the season after suffering a torn ACL in the AFC Championship Game, Felix Anudike-Uzomah, a 2023 first-round pick who scarcely played as a rookie, and Malik Herring must step up on the edge.

At the second level, Gay's athleticism will be missed, but linebacker Drue Tranquill showcased his versatile skills — blitzing, tackling and in coverage — in his debut season in Spags' system and slides seamlessly in the starting lineup alongside Nick Bolton, the instinctive defensive play-caller with a nose for the ball. Leo Chenal and Jack Cochrane provide linebacker depth.

Sneed was a perfect fit at corner in Kansas City's defense. His loss will be felt, but defensive backs coach Dave Merritt has put on a master class developing young talent. The Chiefs love physical, high-IQ corners who battle at the line of scrimmage in press man and pass off route combinations downfield with ease. All-Pro Trent McDuffie leads a young cornerback room that includes Joshua Williams, Jaylen Watson and Nazeeh Johnson, who had a great camp last year before a knee injury. The Chiefs added former Tennessee corner Kamal Hadden, who matches Sneed's physical profile, in the sixth round. On the back end, safety Justin Reid remains the leader after enjoying a career year (95 tackles) with a highlight reel loaded with big hits. Bryan Cook returns from a late-season ankle injury to bolster a versatile safety room that includes Chamarri Conner and added fourth-round pick Jaden Hicks (Washington State).

SPECIALISTS

Worthy may need time to digest Reid's playbook, but he can make an immediate impact as a punt returner. Don't sleep on Rees-Zammit's potential special-teams impact, especially with the NFL's new kickoff rules. He may compete with running back Deneric Prince for kickoff-return duties.

Harrison Butker shrugged off an injury-plagued 2022 season and re-established himself as one of the top kickers in the NFL last season, while also dramatically increasing his touchback percentage. The Chiefs moved on from punter Tommy Townsend after he disappointed last season, giving the job to Matt Araiza, who has missed the last two NFL seasons after Buffalo cut him in training camp in 2022 amid serious legal issues. Dubbed "Punt God" at San Diego State, Araiza set the NCAA record with a 51.2-yard average in 2021. James Winchester returns for his 10th season as the long snapper.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Chiefs have the top player in the QB-driven NFL and have reached the AFC Championship Game every year Mahomes has been the starter. They plugged the glaring holes on the roster in free agency and the draft, so it's reasonable to expect the offense to improve while the defense stays steady.

With road wins at Buffalo and Baltimore en route to last season's Super Bowl repeat, Mahomes and company answered the only lingering question about their playoff pedigree. They once again will be — and deserve to be — the Super Bowl favorites with the chance to achieve all-time greatness in 2024.

JAY BIGGERSTAFF-USA TODAY SPORTS

2023 RESULTS (11-6)

Sept.	7	Detroit	L	20-21
Sept.	17	at Jacksonville	W	17-9
Sept.	24	Chicago	W	41-10
Oct.	1	at N.Y. Jets	W	23-20
Oct.	8	at Minnesota	W	27-20
Oct.	12	Denver	W	19-8
Oct.	22	L.A. Chargers	W	31-17
Oct.	29	at Denver	L	9-24
Nov.	5	Miami	W	21-14
Nov.	20	Philadelphia	L	17-21
Nov.	26	at Las Vegas	W	31-17
Dec.	3	at Green Bay	L	19-27
Dec.	10	Buffalo	L	17-20
Dec.	18	at New England	W	27-17
Dec.	25	Las Vegas	L	14-20
Dec.	31	Cincinnati	W	25-17
Jan.	7	L.A. Chargers	W	13-12
Postseason				
Jan.	13	MIami	W	26-7
Jan.	21	at Buffalo	W	27-24
Jan.	28	at Baltimore	W	17-10
Feb.	11	San Francisco (ot)	W	25-22

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	351.3	9	4
Rushing	104.9	19	9
Passing	246.4	6	2
Scoring	21.8	15	8
Third Down %	43.6	6	2
Points/Play	0.344	16	8

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	289.8	2	2
Rushing	113.2	18	10
Passing	176.5	4	3
Scoring	17.3	2	2
Interceptions	8	T27	16
Sacks	57	2	2
Opp. Pts./Play	0.273	2	2
TO Differential	-11	T28	T15

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Patrick Mahomes	597	401	4,183	27	14
Blaine Gabbert	35	18	185	0	3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Isiah Pacheco	205	935	4.6	7
Patrick Mahomes	75	389	5.2	0
C. Edwards-Helaire	70	223	3.2	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Travis Kelce	93	984	10.6	5
Rashee Rice	79	938	11.9	7
Isiah Pacheco	44	244	5.5	2
Noah Gray	28	305	10.9	2
Justin Watson	27	460	17.0	3
Kadarius Toney	27	169	6.3	1

KICKING: Harrison Butker, 33-35 FGs, 38-38 PATs, 137 points
TACKLES: Justin Reid, 95; Trent McDuffie, 80
SACKS: Chris Jones, 10.5; George Karlaftis, 10.5
INTERCEPTIONS: L'Jarius Sneed, 2; six tied with 1

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

KELCE'S RISING STAR Perhaps you've heard about TE **Travis Kelce**'s girlfriend. Taylor Swift is kind of a big deal, but Kelce's got his own star power well beyond a Hall of Fame playing career. Kelce — who hosts the hit podcast "New Heights" with his now-retired brother, **Jason** — famously hosted "Saturday Night Live" last offseason and this offseason starred as the host of Prime Video's "Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?" that is set for a fall release.

A WORTHY FIRST-ROUND PICK The Xavier Worthy-Tyreek Hill comparisons are inevitable after the former set an NFL Scouting Combine record in the 40-yard dash (4.21). The Chiefs have lacked that kind of elite speed since trading Hill to the Dolphins, so the bar will be high for Worthy in Kansas City. But if history is a guide, Worthy, who averaged 16.9 yards per punt return last season at Texas, may have the biggest impact on special teams as he grows into a WR role with the offense. Hill's biggest contribution as a rookie came in the return game. In 2016, he averaged an NFL-best 15.2 yards per punt return and scored three special-teams touchdowns.

BEST IN THE BIZ With Bill Belichick out of the league, at least for 2024, Andy Reid ascends to the undisputed title of "best active coach in the NFL." Reid has led the Chiefs to three Super Bowl titles and four Super Bowl appearances in the last five seasons. He also got compensated like it this offseason, signing a five-year extension through 2029 that makes him the NFL's highest-paid coach. GM Brett Veach and president Mark Donovan also inked new deals.

TWO-SPORT STAR Running back Louis Rees-Zammit promises to be one of the most delightful training-camp storylines as Reid dreams up ways to utilize the former Welsh rugby star's talents. Rees-Zammit's father, Joe, played for the Cardiff Bay Tigers, an American football team in his native Wales, in the 1980s. Rees-Zammit became enamored with the sport and dreamed of an NFL career, which the 23-year-old will try to realize with the two-time reigning champs.

SCOUTING THE CHIEFS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP KANSAS CITY "We all know how good Patrick Mahomes is. Not sure who's going to stand in his way in a bid to three-peat as Super Bowl champs. … The innate timing and connection between Mahomes and Travis Kelce is Hall of Fame-type of stuff. It's like John Stockton and Karl Malone in basketball. … Kelce is up there in years, but he takes good care of himself and is always in great shape. People can say he's gone Hollywood or whatever, but who cares who he's dating, honestly. The relationship with Taylor Swift didn't stop them from winning the Super Bowl again last season. The guy is all about football when it's time to play. … This Rashee Rice situation is so much to work through. Got to wonder if he's going to be distracted, even if he doesn't wind up getting suspended this year with how slow the court system usually runs. … Xavier Worthy's speed gives Mahomes another weapon to throw to. … Isiah Pacheco is a beast. … Carson Wentz could fit in pretty well as a backup, but, of course, you hope he never has to play. … For my money, the interior offensive line with Creed Humphrey, Joe Thuney and Trey Smith is as a good as it gets. … Jawaan Taylor is a holding machine. … Getting Chris Jones back was pivotal. You can't let that guy walk. … When they get Charles Omenihu back from the torn ACL, watch out. He's working very hard to get back to 100 percent. … Nick Bolton is outstanding in pursuit. … Justin Reid has improved significantly in the past two seasons. … Trent McDuffie is ready for an increased role. I think they won't miss L'Jarius Sneed that much."

KEN BLAZE-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 CHIEFS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
Book, Ian	QB	6-0	206	2	Notre Dame	FA-24	D4-NO-21
15 Mahomes, Patrick	QB	6-2	225	7	Texas Tech	D1-17	D1-KC-17
13 Oladokun, Chris	QB	6-2	195	1	South Dakota State	FA-22	FA-Pit-22
Wentz, Carson	QB	6-5	237	8	North Dakota State	FA-LAR-24	D1-Phi-16

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
25 Edwards-Helaire, Clyde	RB	5-7	207	4	LSU	D1-20	D1-KC-20
Hall, Hassan	RB	6-0	196	1	Georgia Tech	FA-24	FA-Cle-23
30 Ingram, Keaontay	RB	6-0	220	2	USC	FA-23	D6-Ari-22
10 Pacheco, Isiah	RB	5-10	216	2	Rutgers	D7b-22	D7b-KC-22
29 Perine, La'Mical	RB	5-11	216	2	Florida	FA-22	D4-NYJ-20
34 Prince, Deneric	RB	6-0	216	1	Tulsa	FA-23	FA-KC-23
Rees-Zammit, Louis	RB	6-3	194	1	None	FA-24	FA-KC-24

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5 Brown, Marquise	WR	5-9	180	5	Oklahoma	FA-Ari-24	D1-Bal-19
89 Bushman, Matt	TE	6-5	245	1	BYU	FA-22	FA-LV-21
83 Gray, Noah	TE	6-3	240	3	Duke	D5a-21	D5a-KC-21
87 Kelce, Travis	TE	6-5	250	11	Cincinnati	D3a-13	D3a-KC-13
24 Moore, Skyy	WR	5-10	195	2	Western Michigan	D2a-22	D2a-KC-22
14 Powell, Cornell	WR	6-0	204	1	Clemson	D5b-21	D5b-KC-21
82 Prince, Gerrit	TE	6-5	241	1	UAB	FA-23	FA-KC-23
4 Rice, Rashee	WR	6-1	204	1	SMU	D2-23	D2-KC-23
8 Ross, Justyn	WR	6-4	210	2	Clemson	FA-22	FA-KC-22
Smith Jr., Irv	TE	6-2	240	5	Alabama	FA-Cin-24	D2-Min-19
19 Toney, Kadarius	WR	6-0	193	3	Florida	T-NYG-22	D1-NYG-21
80 Washington, Montrell	WR	5-10	170	2	Samford	FA-23	D5-Den-22
84 Watson, Justin	WR	6-2	215	6	Pennsylvania	FA-22	D5-TB-18

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
66 Caliendo, Mike	OL	6-4	301	1	Western Michigan	FA-22	FA-KC-22
72 Godrick, Chukwuebuka	T	6-5	295	1	None	FA-23	FA-KC-23
52 Humphrey, Creed	C	6-4	302	3	Oklahoma	D2b-21	D2b-KC-21
64 Morris, Wanya	OL	6-6	307	1	Oklahoma	D3-23	D3-KC-23
77 Niang, Lucas	T	6-6	315	3	TCU	D3-20	D3-KC-20
61 Reiter, Austin	C	6-3	301	7	South Florida	FA-22	D7-Was-15
65 Smith, Trey	G	6-6	321	3	Tennessee	D6-21	D6-KC-21
74 Taylor, Jawaan	T	6-5	330	5	Florida	FA-Jac-23	D2-Jac-19
62 Thuney, Joe	G	6-5	304	8	NC State	FA-NE-21	D3a-NE-16

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
97 Anudike-Uzomah, Felix	DE	6-4	255	1	Kansas State	D1-23	D1-KC-23
96 Buggs, Isaiah	DT	6-3	306	5	Alabama	FA-23	D6-Pit-19
51 Danna, Mike	DE	6-2	257	4	Michigan	D5-20	D5-KC-20
93 Dickerson, Matt	DT	6-5	298	3	UCLA	FA-23	FA-Ten-18
92 Farrell, Neil	DT	6-4	325	2	LSU	T-LV-23	D4b-LV-22
94 Herring, Malik	DE	6-3	275	3	Georgia	FA-21	FA-KC-21
95 Jones, Chris	DT	6-6	310	8	Mississippi State	D2-16	D2-KC-16
57 Jones, Truman	DE	6-4	250	1	Harvard	FA-23	FA-KC-23
56 Karlaftis, George	DE	6-4	263	2	Purdue	D1b-22	D1b-KC-22
91 Nnadi, Derrick	DT	6-1	317	6	Florida State	D3a-18	D3a-KC-18
90 Omenihu, Charles	DE	6-5	280	5	Texas	FA-SF-23	D5-Hou-19
69 Pennel, Mike	NT	6-4	330	9	Colorado St.-Pueblo	FA-23	FA-GB-14
Smith, Jordan	DE	6-7	255	2	UAB	FA-24	D4-Jac-21
53 Thompson, BJ	DE	6-6	243	1	Stephen F. Austin	D5-23	D5-KC-23
98 Wharton, Tershawn	DT	6-1	280	4	Missouri S&T	FA-20	FA-KC-20

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
32 Bolton, Nick	LB	5-11	237	3	Missouri	D2a-21	D2a-KC-21
54 Chenal, Leo	LB	6-3	250	2	Wisconsin	D3-22	D3-KC-22
48 Christiansen, Cole	LB	6-1	230	1	Army	FA-22	FA-LAC-20
43 Cochrane, Jack	LB	6-3	236	2	South Dakota	FA-22	FA-KC-22
59 Harris, Darius	LB	6-2	232	4	Middle Tennessee	FA-23	FA-KC-19
44 Jones, Cam	LB	6-2	227	1	Indiana	FA-23	FA-KC-23
23 Tranquill, Drue	LB	6-2	234	5	Notre Dame	FA-LAC-23	D4-LAC-19

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
40 Boye-Doe, Ekow	CB	6-0	177	1	Kansas State	FA-23	FA-KC-23
26 Bush, Deon	S	6-0	200	8	Miami	FA-Chi-22	D4b-Chi-16
27 Conner, Chamarri	DB	6-0	202	1	Virginia Tech	D4-23	D4-KC-23
6 Cook, Bryan	S	6-1	206	2	Cincinnati	D2b-22	D2b-KC-22
42 Dean, Trey	S	6-3	200	1	Florida	FA-23	FA-NYJ-23
13 Johnson, Nazeeh	S	5-10	199	2	Marshall	D7c-22	D7c-KC-22
31 Jones, Nic	CB	6-0	189	1	Ball State	D7-23	D7-KC-23
22 McDuffie, Trent	CB	5-11	193	2	Washington	D1a-22	D1a-KC-22
20 Reid, Justin	S	6-1	207	6	Stanford	FA-Hou-22	D3a-Hou-18
39 Taylor, Keith	CB	6-3	195	3	Washington	FA-23	D5-Car-21
35 Watson, Jaylen	CB	6-2	197	2	Washington State	D7a-22	D7a-KC-22
2 Williams, Joshua	CB	6-3	193	2	Fayetteville State	D4-22	D4-KC-22

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
Araiza, Matt	P	6-2	200	1	San Diego State	FA-24	D6-Buf-22
7 Butker, Harrison	K	6-4	205	7	Georgia Tech	FA-17	FA-Car-17
41 Winchester, James	LS	6-3	209	9	Oklahoma	FA-15	FA-Phi-13

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	4	Rashee Rice	19	Kadarius Toney
WR	5	Marquise Brown	84	Justin Watson
WR	1	Xavier Worthy (R)	24	Skyy Moore
LT	64	Wanya Morris	76	Kingsley Suamataia (R)
LG	62	Joe Thuney	66	Mike Caliendo
C	52	Creed Humphrey	60	Hunter Nourzad (R)
RG	65	Trey Smith	61	C.J. Hanson (R)
RT	74	Jawaan Taylor	77	Lucas Niang
TE	87	Travis Kelce	83	Noah Gray
QB	15	Patrick Mahomes		Carson Wentz
RB	10	Isiah Pacheco	25	Clyde Edwards-Helaire

DEFENSE

DE	56	George Karlaftis	94	Malik Herring
DT	91	Derrick Nnadi	98	Tershawn Wharton
DT	95	Chris Jones	69	Mike Pennel
DE	51	Mike Danna	97	Felix Anudike-Uzomah
LB	23	Drue Tranquill	43	Jack Cochrane
LB	32	Nick Bolton	54	Leo Chenal
CB	21	Trent McDuffie	31	Nic Jones
CB	2	Joshua Williams	13	Nazeeh Johnson
CB	35	Jaylen Watson	17	Kamal Hadden (R)
S	6	Bryan Cook	21	Jaden Hicks (R)
S	20	Justin Reid	27	Chamarri Conner

SPECIALISTS

P		Matt Araiza	PR	1	Xavier Worthy (R)
K	7	Harrison Butker	KR	34	Deneric Prince

6.9

Kansas City receivers dropped a league-worst 6.9 percent of their passes from Patrick Mahomes per Pro Football Reference.

CHIEFS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Xavier Worthy	WR	6-1	172	Texas
2.	Kingsley Suamataia	OT	6-4	329	BYU
4.	Jared Wiley	TE	6-6	253	TCU
4.	Jaden Hicks	S	6-3	212	Washington St.
5.	Hunter Nourzad	C	6-3	319	Penn State
6.	Kamal Hadden	CB	6-1	197	Tennessee
7.	C.J. Hanson	OG	6-5	300	Holy Cross

Xavier Worthy instantly becomes one of the NFL's fastest players with a chance to learn alongside Marquise "Hollywood" Brown and immediately impact the return game. Kingsley Suamataia arguably filled a bigger need for the OL-hungry Chiefs, who were in search of reinforcements across the line — as evident from the Hunter Nourzad and C.J. Hanson picks. The 21-year-old Suamataia is a powerful, agile physical marvel who needs to clean up his technique but will compete for the left tackle job. Jared Wiley has great hands and instincts on option routes making him an intriguing understudy for Travis Kelce, while Jaden Hicks and Kamal Hadden possess the size, versatility and toughness the Chiefs covet in the secondary.

LV RAIDERS

AFC WEST FORECAST

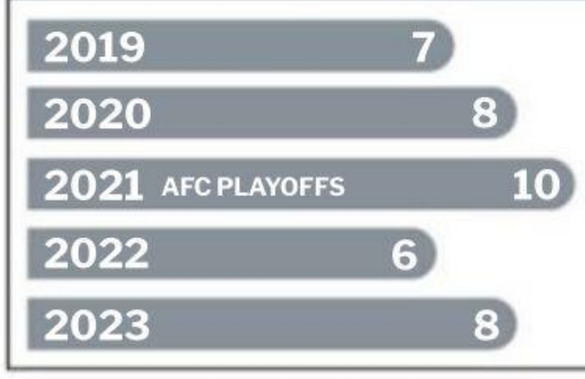
3

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	at L.A. Chargers	3:05
Sept. 15	at Baltimore	1:00
Sept. 22	Carolina	4:05
Sept 29	Cleveland	4:25
Oct. 6	at Denver	4:05
Oct. 13	Pittsburgh	4:05
Oct. 20	at L.A. Rams	4:05
Oct. 27	Kansas City	4:25
Nov. 3	at Cincinnati	1:00
Nov. 10	BYE	
Nov. 17	at Miami	1:00
Nov. 24	Denver	4:05
Nov. 29	at Kansas City	3:00
Dec. 8	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Dec. 16	Atlanta	8:30
Dec. 22	Jacksonville	4:25
Dec. 29	at New Orleans	1:00
Jan. 4/5	L.A. Chargers	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Antonio Pierce
Record With Team: 5-4
Career Record: 5-4
Offensive Coordinator: Luke Getsy
Defensive Coordinator: Patrick Graham
Special Teams Coordinator: Tom McMahon
Quarterbacks: Rich Scangarello
Running Backs: Carnell Williams
Wide Receivers: Edgar Bennett
Tight Ends: Luke Steckel
Pass Game Coordinator: Scott Turner
Offensive Line: Jame Cregg
Defensive Line: Rob Leonard
Run Game Coordinator/Linebackers: Mike Caldwell
Cornerbacks: Ricky Manning Jr.
Safeties: Gerald Alexander

The Raiders have improved their roster significantly over the last few years Despite the setbacks of past regimes, such as Josh McDaniels' unsuccessful head-coaching tenure, the team still managed to do some good. A skilled, predominantly homegrown roster stands as an example of the positives.

But it comes with a catch. Their ever-futile chase for their franchise quarterback turned up empty this offseason. The Raiders believe they can compete with veteran Gardner Minshew II or second-year man Aidan O'Connell, and to some extent, they will. But for all the youth and promise of the team that popular head coach Antonio Pierce will put on the field, chances are it will ultimately be held back by the limitations of its quarterbacks.

That said, the Raiders will continue to lay the foundation for what they hope is a turn-key team for their eventual quarterback. To the level they can compete — and the playoffs are not out of the question with a Maxx Crosby-led defense and Davante Adams-led offense — they believe that the positive steps will pay future dividends.

OFFENSE

To lift an offense that averaged just 19.5 points per game, the Raiders are counting on a number of factors: an improved offensive line; the additions of offensive coordinator Luke Getsy, Georgia tight end Brock Bowers and Oregon offensive lineman Jackson Powers-Johnson; and the newcomers meshing with holdovers Adams, Jakobi Meyers and Michael Mayer.

But for all this to work, the Raiders must get a high level of play from either O'Connell or Minshew. Otherwise, it will be another wasted season.

O'Connell acquitted himself well over the last nine games of the season, guiding the Raiders to a 5-4 record. His rookie season was the second-best of all first-year quarterbacks, behind Houston's record-setter and Offensive Rookie of the Year C.J. Stroud.

It's no guarantee O'Connell will hold on to the job, though, as Minshew signed with the Raiders with the idea of being the starting quarterback. From that competition, the Raiders believe they can produce viable quarterback play.

Whoever lines up behind center will have a slew of playmakers. Adams shows no signs of letting up after producing another season of 100-plus catches and 1,000-plus yards. Meyers is the perfect complement to him. Mayer, the second-year tight end from Notre Dame, is being counted on to put it all together in Year 2. The Raiders raised some eyebrows when they selected Bowers with the 13th overall pick, but the vision is to play both together to create matchup issues all over the field.

Running back Zamir White, who led the NFL in rushing over the last four games of last season after stepping in for an injured Josh Jacobs, gets a chance to hold the RB1 job full-time. He will run behind an offensive line that returns an effective left side with tackle Kolton Miller, guard Dylan Parham and center Andre James, but a completely rebuilt right side.

Powers-Johnson is expected to take over at right guard, with rookie DJ Glaze and veteran Thayer Munford Jr. waging a camp battle for the right tackle spot. The hope is that Powers-Johnson and whoever claims the tackle job are an improvement over last season.

If so, this offense will be ready to roll. Assuming the quarterback is too, of course.

DAVANTE ADAMS
WIDE RECEIVER

JASEN VINLOVE-USA TODAY SPORTS

DEFENSE

The Raiders executed a remarkable turnaround last year by surrendering the ninth-fewest points in the league. To put that in perspective, they have been hovering in the high 20s for years now. There is no reason to think that will change. In fact, it has a chance to be even better.

Crosby is the undisputed heart and soul of the team and has firmly placed himself on a Hall of Fame track. His unmatchable work ethic in and out of season has become so contagious that his teammates just follow his lead. And unlike in seasons past, he finally has some real help.

Interior defensive lineman Christian Wilkins was signed in free agency, giving the Raiders the stud tackle they have lacked for years. Opposing offensive lines must now decide where to slide their blocking help, and no matter what they decide, one of the best defensive linemen in the game will get a favorable matchup as a result.

Malcolm Koonce emerged off the edge in his third year and is looking to do even bigger things this season. He will get pushed by second-year edge rusher Tyree Wilson, whose rookie season was essentially wiped out by a foot injury he suffered late in his final season at Texas Tech. The Raiders used all of last season to re-acclimate Wilson to football after his entire offseason and nearly all of training camp were lost to rehabilitation. He began rounding into form over the last month of last season, and if he uses this offseason wisely, the Raiders might see returns on the player in whom they invested the seventh overall pick in the 2023 draft.

Robert Spillane has emerged as the No. 1 linebacker and co-defensive leader; he and Divine Deablo form a three-down tandem that rarely leaves the field. They should benefit from the presence of Wilkins, who will occupy blockers and open up space for Deablo and Spillane to feast. Wilkins is a massive upgrade over Bilal Nichols, who signed with Arizona in free agency.

A revamped Raiders secondary features young cornerbacks Jack Jones and Nate Hobbs and safeties Tre'von Moehrig and Marcus Epps. Outside of the perimeter cornerback opposite Jones, the Raiders return every other starter.

For the first time in years, the Raiders enter a third straight season with the same defensive coordinator. Patrick Graham's work will soon earn him head-coaching looks.

SPECIALISTS

Kicker Daniel Carlson and punter AJ Cole are as good as it gets in the NFL. The Raiders, like so many other teams, are trying to figure out how to handle the new kickoff rules, so expect some surprises in terms of return and coverage strategy.

FINAL ANALYSIS

By no means are the Raiders a viable threat to the Chiefs' AFC West throne. And the Super Bowl remains a distant goal. But they are finally doing the right things organizationally to give themselves a legitimate chance to build a winning roster.

Pierce's presence lifted the spirits of everyone in the building, including an adoring group of players. The instant shift from the sullen atmosphere in the last stages of McDaniels' regime to Pierce's joy was undeniable.

The Raiders will go as far as a talented roster and their limited quarterbacks take them. But they can take a big step forward as an organization even as they continue to look for their franchise quarterback. If they do so, that is real progress.

LV

2023 RESULTS (8-9)

Sept. 10	at Denver	W	17-16
Sept. 17	at Buffalo	L	10-38
Sept. 24	Pittsburgh	L	18-23
Oct. 1	at L.A. Chargers	L	17-24
Oct. 9	Green Bay	W	17-13
Oct. 15	New England	W	21-17
Oct. 22	at Chicago	L	12-30
Oct. 30	at Detroit	L	14-26
Nov. 5	N.Y. Giants	W	30-6
Nov. 12	N.Y. Jets	W	16-12
Nov. 19	at Miami	L	13-20
Nov. 26	Kansas City	L	17-31
Dec. 10	Minnesota	L	0-3
Dec. 14	L.A. Chargers	W	63-21
Dec. 25	at Kansas City	W	20-14
Dec. 31	at Indianapolis	L	20-23
Jan. 7	Denver	W	27-14

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	289.5	27	13
Rushing	90.7	30	15
Passing	198.8	23	11
Scoring	19.5	23	12
Third Down %	35.6	T24	11
Points/Play	0.329	19	10

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	330.9	15	9
Rushing	118.5	21	12
Passing	212.4	12	7
Scoring	19.5	9	5
Interceptions	13	T17	11
Sacks	46	T13	T10
Opp. Pts./Play	0.304	5	3
TO Differential	-2	20	10

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Aidan O'Connell	343	213	2,218	12	7
Jimmy Garoppolo	169	110	1,205	7	9
Brian Hoyer	42	23	231	0	2

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Josh Jacobs	233	805	3.5	6
Zamir White	104	451	4.3	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Davante Adams	103	1,144	11.1	8
Jakobi Meyers	71	807	11.4	8
Josh Jacobs	37	296	8.0	0
Michael Mayer	27	304	11.3	2
Hunter Renfrow	25	255	10.2	0
Austin Hooper	25	234	9.4	0

KICKING: Daniel Carlson, 34-37 FGs, 35-36 PATs, 137 points
TACKLES: Robert Spillane, 148; Divine Deablo, 105
SACKS: Maxx Crosby, 14.5; Malcolm Koonce, 8.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Tre'von Moehrig, 3; Robert Spillane, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

UNCONVENTIONAL OR GENIUS? After trading up in the second round to select dynamic Notre Dame tight end Michael Mayer in last year's draft, the Raiders doubled down at that position in 2024 by using the 13th overall pick to land Georgia tight end Brock Bowers. Huh? Right off the bat, some wondered if it was an indication of what the Raiders thought of Mayer. General manager Tom Telesco put all that to rest on draft night by declaring "I love Michael Mayer." In truth, the Raiders view Bowers as a weapon who supersedes any position designation. Mayer's ability to be a dominant blocker and traditional tight end allows the Raiders to use Bowers as a versatile chess piece rather than pigeonhole him into the normal tight end role.

CROSBY WANTS TO BE LEGENDARY
Defensive end **Maxx Crosby** constantly talks about one of his idols, Kobe Bryant, and wanting to be legendary like the late, great NBA star. Crosby was humbled to find out that multiple prospects at the NFL Scouting Combine and the Senior Bowl mentioned him as the role model for what they aspire to be. Crosby pointed to the impact of Bryant when informed of that. "He said the main thing about being legendary is inspiring the youth and bringing people along and showing people the way," Crosby said. "And for me, that's always been in the back of my head is inspiring others, not only my teammates but other people around the league and coming into the league. For me seeing that, it's like the ultimate respect."

ALL BUSINESS At some point last season, Raiders linebacker Robert Spillane was told that his pass defense had vastly improved. It was meant as a compliment, but Spillane took it as a slight. "Yeah, I would say the chip on my shoulder has grown to a crack on my shoulder at this point in my career. You get some recognition, you get some praise, but at the same time you know that there's so much more out there for you to go take," Spillane says.

SCOUTING THE RAIDERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP LAS VEGAS "Antonio Pierce defines the term, 'players' coach.' He gets it. He's very relatable and authentic. Guys respond to him and that's why he got the permanent head-coaching job. … New general manager Tom Telesco has a lot of experience. Thought he did a good job drafting for the Chargers, but wasn't great at free agency as far as negotiating with players. Too many contract disputes. … At quarterback, Aidan O'Connell has some untapped potential. Not sure they have a good enough offensive coordinator in Luke Getsy to bring it out of him. Feels like they settled at the play-caller spot. … Gardner Minshew II has got to be the best backup in the NFL … Davante Adams is going to get a lot of targets, especially considering they don't have much talent to complement him. Jakobi Meyers and Michael Gallup don't scare defensive backs. … Liking the Brock Bowers pick. He can get the job done in a big way. Having Bowers and Michael Mayer, that's a nice tandem … Kolton Miller is a blue-collar worker with sweet feet. … Maxx Crosby is just relentless and has a ton of moves. It's a long day at the office against that guy. … Having Christian Wilkins and Crosby on the same defensive line, that should be illegal. … Smart the way they've developed Divine Deablo into a run-and-hit linebacker. … Nate Hobbs is underrated, in my book. … Tre'von Moehrig is smart and instinctive. …. Jack Jones has a strong background with Pierce. That helps keep him in line, on and off the field."

JAY BIGGERSTAFF-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 RAIDERS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
13 Brown, Anthony	QB	6-1	228	1	Oregon	FA-24	FA-Bal-22
15 Minshew II, Gardner	QB	6-1	225	5	Washington State	FA-Ind-24	D6-Jac-19
4 O'Connell, Aidan	QB	6-3	210	1	Purdue	D4b-23	D4b-LV-23

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
8 Abdullah, Ameer	RB	5-9	203	9	Nebraska	FA-Car-22	D2-Det-15
38 Brown, Brittain	RB	6-1	205	2	UCLA	D7b-22	D7b-LV-22
22 Mattison, Alexander	RB	5-11	215	5	Boise State	FA-Min-23	D3-Min-19
32 McAllister, Tyreik	RB	5-11	180	1	Charleston (WV)	FA-24	FA-Den-22
47 McCormick, Sincere	RB	5-9	205	2	UTSA	FA-22	FA-LV-22
3 White, Zamir	RB	6-0	215	2	Georgia	D4a-22	D4a-LV-22

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Adams, Davante	WR	6-1	215	10	Fresno State	T-GB-22	D2-GB-14
84 Bryant, Harrison	TE	6-5	230	4	Florida Atlantic	FA-Cle-24	D4-Cle-20
85 Fotheringham, Cole	TE	6-4	243	1	Utah	FA-22	FA-LV-22
10 Gallup, Michael	WR	6-1	205	6	Colorado State	FA-Dal-24	D3-Dal-18
88 Gentry, Zach	TE	6-8	265	5	Michigan	FA-23	D5-Pit-19
4 Guyton, Jalen	WR	6-1	212	4	North Texas	FA-LAC-24	FA-Dal-19
87 Mayer, Michael	TE	6-4	265	1	Notre Dame	D2-23	D2-LV-23
16 Meyers, Jakobi	WR	6-2	200	5	NC State	FA-NE-23	FA-NE-19
86 Shenker, John Samuel	TE	6-4	250	1	Auburn	FA-24	FA-LV-23
11 Tucker, Tre	WR	5-9	185	1	Cincinnati	D3b-23	D3b-LV-23
19 Turner, DJ	WR	5-9	205	2	Pittsburgh	FA-21	FA-LV-21
83 Wilkerson, Kristian	WR	6-1	214	2	SE Missouri State	FA-23	FA-Ten-20

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
79 Brown, Ben	C	6-5	312	1	Ole Miss	FA-24	FA-Cin-22
68 James, Andre	C	6-4	300	5	UCLA	FA-19	FA-LV-19
73 McKenzie, Jalen	T	6-5	315	2	USC	FA-23	FA-Ten-22
61 Meredith, Jordan	G	6-2	300	1	Western Kentucky	FA-22	FA-LAR-21
74 Miller, Kolton	T	6-8	325	6	UCLA	D1-18	D1-LV-18
77 Munford Jr., Thayer	T	6-6	315	2	Ohio State	D7a-22	D7a-LV-22
66 Parham, Dylan	G	6-3	285	2	Memphis	D3-22	D3-LV-22
Peat, Andrus	G/T	6-7	316	9	Stanford	FA-NO-24	D1a-NO-15
78 Wagner, Dalton	T	6-8	320	1	Arkansas	FA-23	FA-LV-23
65 Whitehair, Cody	OL	6-3	316	8	Kansas State	FA-Chi-24	D2-Chi-16

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
62 Agoha, David	DE	6-4	252	1	None	FA-23	FA-LV-23
69 Butler, Adam	DT	6-5	300	7	Vanderbilt	FA-23	FA-NE-17
94 Butler, Matthew	DT	6-3	290	2	Tennessee	D5-22	D5-LV-22
98 Crosby, Maxx	DE	6-5	255	5	Eastern Michigan	D4a-19	D4a-LV-19
95 Jenkins, John	DT	6-3	327	11	Georgia	FA-Mia-23	D3-NO-13
51 Koonce, Malcolm	DE	6-3	250	3	Buffalo	D3a-21	D3a-LV-21
96 McCall, Marquan	DT	6-3	345	2	Kentucky	FA-23	FA-Car-22
97 Robinson, Janarius	DE	6-5	258	3	Florida State	FA-23	D4-Min-21
99 Silvera, Nesta Jade	DT	6-2	315	1	Arizona State	D7-23	D7-LV-23
92 Smith, Elerson	DE	6-7	250	3	Northern Iowa	FA-23	D4-NYG-21
49 Snowden, Charles	DE	6-7	245	2	Virginia	FA-23	FA-Chi-21
94 Wilkins, Christian	DT	6-4	310	5	Clemson	FA-Mia-24	D1-Mia-19
9 Wilson, Tyree	DE	6-6	275	1	Texas Tech	D1-23	D1-LV-23
93 Young, Byron	DT	6-3	292	1	Alabama	D3a-23	D3a-LV-23

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
56 Burney, Amari	LB	6-2	228	1	Florida	D6-23	D6-LV-23
58 Butler, Darien	LB	6-0	225	2	Arizona State	FA-22	FA-LV-22
5 Deablo, Divine	LB	6-3	223	3	Virginia Tech	D3b-21	D3b-LV-21
59 Masterson, Luke	LB	6-1	220	2	Wake Forest	FA-22	FA-LV-22
43 Mauga, Kana'i	LB	6-2	245	1	USC	FA-22	FA-Den-22
41 Spillane, Robert	LB	6-1	229	5	Western Michigan	FA-Pit-23	FA-Ten-18

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
30 Armstrong, Cornell	CB	6-0	185	5	Southern Miss	FA-23	D6-Mia-18
0 Bennett, Jakorian	CB	5-11	195	1	Maryland	D4a-23	D4a-LV-23
1 Epps, Marcus	S	6-0	191	5	Wyoming	FA-Phi-23	D6-Min-19
31 Facyson, Brandon	CB	6-2	197	6	Virginia Tech	FA-Ind-23	FA-LAC-18
40 Grant, Jaydon	S	6-0	190	1	Oregon State	FA-23	FA-LV-23
39 Hobbs, Nate	CB	6-0	195	3	Illinois	D5-21	D5-LV-21
18 Jones, Jack	CB	5-11	180	2	Arizona State	W-NE-23	D4-NE-22
25 Moehrig, Tre'von	S	6-2	202	3	TCU	D2-21	D2-LV-21
20 Pola-Mao, Isaiah	S	6-4	205	2	USC	FA-22	FA-LV-22
29 Smith II, Chris	S	5-11	195	1	Georgia	D5-23	D5-LV-23
26 Webb, Sam	CB	6-2	195	2	Missouri West. St.	FA-22	FA-LV-22

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
50 Bobenmoyer, Jacob	LS	6-2	235	4	Northern Colorado	FA-Den-23	FA-Den-20
2 Carlson, Daniel	K	6-5	215	6	Auburn	FA-18	D5-Min-18
6 Cole, AJ	P	6-4	220	5	NC State	FA-19	FA-LV-19

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	17	Davante Adams	10	Michael Gallup
WR	16	Jakobi Meyers	19	DJ Turner
WR	11	Tre Tucker	83	Kristian Wilkerson
LT	74	Kolton Miller	71	DJ Glaze (R)
LG	66	Dylan Parham	61	Jordan Meredith
C	68	Andre James	65	Cody Whitehair
RG	70	J. Powers-Johnson (R)	65	Cody Whitehair
RT	77	Thayer Munford Jr.	78	Dalton Wagner
TE	87	Michael Mayer	89	Brock Bowers (R)
QB	12	Aidan O'Connell	15	Gardner Minshew II
RB	3	Zamir White	22	Alexander Mattison

DEFENSE

DE	98	Maxx Crosby	9	Tyree Wilson
DT	94	Christian Wilkins	93	Byron Young
DT	95	John Jenkins	69	Adam Butler
DE	51	Malcom Koonce	97	Janarius Robinson
ILB	41	Robert Spillane	45	Tommy Eichenberg (R)
OLB	5	Divine Deablo	59	Luke Masterson
CB	39	Nate Hobbs	31	Brandon Facyson
CB	18	Jack Jones	21	Dec. Richardson (R)
NB	0	Jakorian Bennett	26	M.J. Devonshire (R)
SS	1	Marcus Epps	29	Chris Smith II
FS	7	Tre'von Moehrig	20	Isaiah Pola-Mao

SPECIALISTS

K	2	Daniel Carlson	KR	8	Ameer Abdullah
P	6	AJ Cole	PR	23	Dylan Laube (R)

6.6

Average target distance allowed by the Raiders per Pro Football Reference last year, lowest in the NFL by .3 yards. Opponents did gain 2,326 yards after catch against them, third most in the NFL.

RAIDERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Brock Bowers	TE	6-4	230	Georgia
2.	Jackson Powers-Johnson	OG	6-3	334	Oregon
3.	DJ Glaze	OT	6-4	323	Maryland
4.	Decamerion Richardson	CB	6-2	195	Mississippi State
5.	Tommy Eichenberg	LB	6-2	239	Ohio State
6.	Dylan Laube	RB	5-10	208	New Hampshire
7.	Trey Taylor	S	6-0	213	Air Force
7.	M.J. Devonshire	CB	5-11	179	Pittsburgh

The Raiders landed two players expected to make Day 1 impacts in Brock Bowers and Jackson Powers-Johnson. Bowers will be used all over the field to take advantage of his size and athletic ability. He has a chance to be an Offensive Rookie of the Year contender. Powers-Johnson's combination of size and athletic ability make him an ideal guard who can maul at the point of attack but also work in space as a puller and second-level blocker. DJ Glaze has a chance to win the starting right tackle spot — if not immediately, then down the line.

CHARGERS

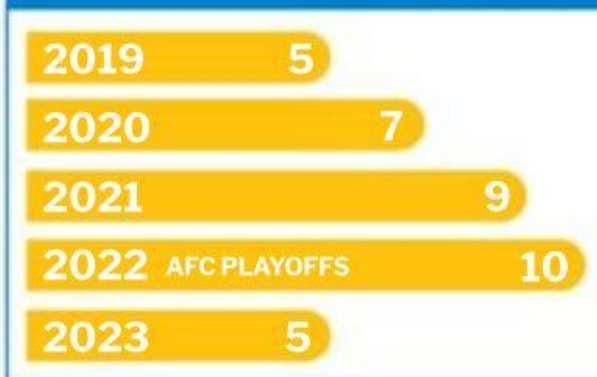
AFC WEST FORECAST

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	Las Vegas	4:05
Sept. 15	at Carolina	1:00
Sept. 22	at Pittsburgh	1:00
Sept. 29	Kansas City	4:25
Oct. 6	BYE	
Oct. 13	at Denver	4:05
Oct. 21	at Arizona	9:00
Oct. 27	New Orleans	4:05
Nov. 3	at Cleveland	1:00
Nov. 10	Tennessee	4:05
Nov. 17	Cincinnati	4:25
Nov. 25	Baltimore	8:15
Dec. 1	at Atlanta	1:00
Dec. 8	at Kansas City	8:20
Dec. 15	Tampa Bay	4:25
Dec. 22	Denver	4:05
Dec. 28	at New England	TBD
Jan. 4/5	at Las Vegas	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Jim Harbaugh
Record With Team: First season
Career Record: 44-19-1
Offensive Coordinator: Greg Roman
Defensive Coordinator: Jesse Minter
Special Teams Coordinator: Ryan Ficken
Passing Game Coordinator: Marcus Brady
Quarterbacks: Shane Day
Running Backs: Derrick Foster
Offensive Quality Control/Wide Receivers: Jeff Carpenter
Wide Receivers: Sanjay Lal
Run Game Coordinator/Tight Ends: Andy Bischoff
Offensive Line: Mike Devlin
Defensive Line: Mike Elston
Linebackers: Navorro Bowman
Defensive Backs: Steve Clinkscale
Safeties: Chris O'Leary

He has succeeded in the NFL and in college, reached a Super Bowl with San Francisco and won a national championship with Michigan. Jim Harbaugh, traditionally, has been a winner. The Chargers? Not so much. Now, the conflicting histories of this head coach and this franchise collide in what promises to be the greatest test yet of Harbaugh's celebrated ability to reverse a team's fortunes.

After leading the Wolverines for nine seasons, Harbaugh made his return to the NFL when the Chargers hired him to replace Brandon Staley following a fifth consecutive year without a playoff victory. Harbaugh coached San Francisco from 2011-14, leading the 49ers to the NFC title game three times. During that stretch, he won five playoff games. The Chargers have won five playoff games over the past 29 years.

When he fired Staley and general manager Tom Telesco late in the 2023 season, owner Dean Spanos said the Chargers would be "reimagining" their approach in attempting to build a consistent postseason contender. The arrival of Harbaugh — at age 60 and with a lifetime winning percentage of 72.5 — represented a lightning strike from well outside the franchise's previous imagination.

Can this established winner do what he always has done and bring success to a franchise that's never won anything? Or will the Chargers' weighty past of empty expectations be too much even for a reigning champion to overcome?

OFFENSE

Because of salary cap issues, the Chargers were unable to invest heavily in free agency. Still, the process was enlightening when their biggest commitment — a fully guaranteed $10 million — went to a tight end with 127 career receptions in six seasons. Will Dissly is recognized as a blocker, one of the best in the NFL and a key cog in Harbaugh's stated desire to turn the Chargers into a pounding, line-of-scrimmage offense. They also allowed the more elusive Austin Ekeler to depart and replaced him at running back with Gus Edwards, a downhill force of gravity who can devour yards and possession time. Then the Chargers added another potentially explosive back in J.K. Dobbins.

By asking less from Justin Herbert, Harbaugh hopes to get more from Herbert. Entering his fifth season, the quarterback has set numerous franchise and league records but still has a bold-faced zero in one vital statistic: postseason wins. Herbert lost his only playoff game, following the 2022 season, when the Chargers blew a 27-point lead at Jacksonville in part because they couldn't run the ball. It seems ridiculous to think Harbaugh and new offensive coordinator Greg Roman won't lean plenty on Herbert and his game-altering right arm. But this new approach will be designed to take some of the burden off of him, swapping individual numbers for team success.

The Chargers did lose significant wide receiver production by trading Keenan Allen and releasing Mike Williams for cap reasons. It's reasonable to expect Joshua Palmer, entering his fourth season, to take another step forward as he assumes a larger role. Rookie Ladd McConkey's polish and NFL-readiness should make for a quick transition. In need of more experience, the Chargers also signed veteran DJ Chark Jr. as a free-agent addition. Quentin Johnston, a 2023 first-rounder, remains a question mark following a rookie year during which he did little to dispel concerns about his hands. The Chargers did add a veteran target for Herbert in tight end Hayden Hurst. But it's notable that, in his first meeting with reporters, Hurst talked extensively about the importance of blocking in any scheme devised by Harbaugh and Roman.

Up front, left tackle Rashawn Slater carries the necessary skills to excel in any offense. He and guard Zion Johnson form an athletic left side that appears to have plenty of potential. The right side will be anchored by rookie tackle Joe Alt. Veteran free agent Bradley Bozeman takes over at center, with Jamaree Salyer the incumbent at right guard.

ROBERT DEUTSCH-USA TODAY SPORTS

DEFENSE

In March, star edge rushers Khalil Mack and Joey Bosa both accepted pay cuts in exchange for future assurances, helping the Chargers navigate their delicate salary cap situation. Those two decisions also greatly bolstered a defense that will have to pressure quarterbacks in order to realize its potential. The Chargers added more punch on the edge by signing Bud Dupree in May. Tuli Tuipulotu showed enough during his rookie year to give the Chargers another edge option and make this position group the defense's most potent — if Bosa can stay healthy after back-to-back injury-marred seasons. Veteran Poona Ford was signed with the idea that he can help plug the interior defensive front against the run and perhaps provide additional quarterback pressure.

The Chargers allowed both their starting inside linebackers — Kenneth Murray and Eric Kendricks — to depart in free agency but made a key low-cost addition by signing Denzel Perryman, who spent his first six NFL seasons with the franchise. Perryman not only is projected to give the defense veteran presence and production, but he also will bring the hard-hitting edge Harbaugh and new coordinator Jesse Minter value. Rookie Junior Colson combines size and speed and the ability to play both inside linebacker positions. Entering his second year, Daiyan Henley should push for playing time after spending his rookie year on special teams.

A dependable pass rush would certainly help a secondary that won't alarm any opposing offensive coordinators. Yes, the Chargers still have safety Derwin James Jr., who might be aided by the team's coaching change more than any player on the roster. Under the previous system employed by Staley, James seemed to be buried under a mass of responsibilities and expectations. Minter likely will try to free up the three-time Pro Bowler and allow James' play to take over. Next to James, the Chargers have Alohi Gilman, whose instincts and reliability impressed the new regime enough that the Chargers re-signed him.

But this defense could have some concerns at cornerback, where Asante Samuel Jr. remains the most consistent playmaker but still isn't great in run support. After Samuel, there's a lot of uncertainty and more promise than performance with players like Kristian Fulton, Ja'Sir Taylor and Deane Leonard.

SPECIALISTS

During an offseason of significant change from the top end of the front office to the tail end of the roster, the Chargers enjoyed great stability among their specialists. Kicker Cameron Dicker, punter JK Scott and return man Derius Davis all are back following standout 2023 seasons.

Under the league's revamped kickoff rules, both Dicker and Davis should remain threats, Dicker because of his directional ability and Davis because of his shiftiness and speed, both of which could prove vital in the NFL's new, tighter alignment.

Also back for the Chargers is special teams coordinator Ryan Ficken, one of only four assistants retained by Harbaugh.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Chargers added some key pieces, but the only one that generated national headlines was the head coach. Harbaugh's arrival was easily the team's biggest victory of the offseason. In comparison, every other move felt more like a tweak to a roster that generated only five wins in 2023. Still, the Chargers fully expect to be improved under their new leadership, though their defense has plenty to prove. This should be a team that's tougher to play against because of a coaching staff that's deep in experience and used to success. None of which guarantees the Chargers anything in a tough AFC. Pushing for a winning record and contending for a playoff berth would be an enormous step forward in a very short time.

LA

2023 RESULTS (5-12)

Sept. 10	Miami	L	34-36
Sept. 17	at Tennessee (ot)	L	24-27
Sept. 24	at Minnesota	W	28-24
Oct. 1	Las Vegas	W	24-17
Oct. 16	Dallas	L	17-20
Oct. 22	at Kansas City	L	17-31
Oct. 29	Chicago	W	30-13
Nov. 6	at N.Y. Jets	W	27-6
Nov. 12	Detroit	L	38-41
Nov. 19	at Green Bay	L	20-23
Nov. 26	Baltimore	L	10-20
Dec. 3	at New England	W	6-0
Dec. 10	Denver	L	7-24
Dec. 14	at Las Vegas	L	21-63
Dec. 23	Buffalo	L	22-24
Dec. 31	at Denver	L	9-16
Jan. 7	Kansas City	L	12-13

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	329.4	18	9
Rushing	96.6	25	13
Passing	232.8	13	6
Scoring	20.4	21	11
Third Down %	38.4	16	5
Points/Play	0.313	23	12

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	AFC Rank
Total	362.9	28	14
Rushing	113.2	17	9
Passing	249.8	30	16
Scoring	23.4	24	14
Interceptions	9	T25	14
Sacks	48	T9	8
Opp. Pts./Play	0.358	20	11
TO Differential	0	T16	9

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Justin Herbert	456	297	3,134	20	7
Easton Stick	174	111	1,129	3	1

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Austin Ekeler	179	628	3.5	5
Joshua Kelley	107	405	3.8	2
Justin Herbert	52	228	4.4	3

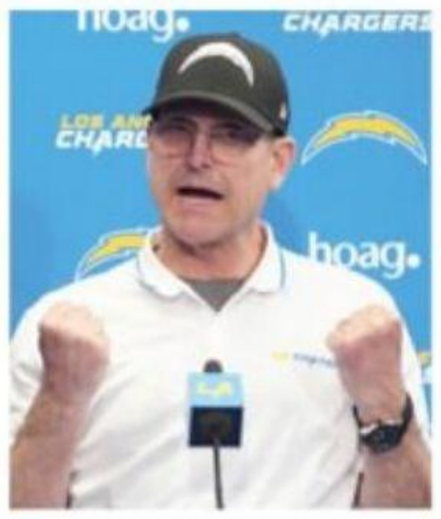
RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Keenan Allen	108	1,243	11.5	7
Austin Ekeler	51	436	8.5	1
Gerald Everett	51	411	8.1	3
Joshua Palmer	38	581	15.3	2
Quentin Johnston	38	431	11.3	2
Donald Parham Jr.	27	285	10.6	4

KICKING: Cameron Dicker, 31-33 FGs, 35-35 PATs, 128 points
TACKLES: Derwin James Jr., 125; Eric Kendricks, 117
SACKS: Khalil Mack, 17.0; Joey Bosa, 6.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Alohi Gilman, 2; Asante Samuel Jr., 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

RAVENS WEST Joe Hortiz spent 26 years with Baltimore before being hired as the Chargers' new general manager. In his first three-plus months on the job, he signed four former Ravens — running backs Gus Edwards and J.K. Dobbins, center Bradley Bozeman and tight end Hayden Hurst. Leading the Chargers means facing Kansas City at least twice a year. Reassembling Baltimore's recent roster might not be the most promising approach. Since Patrick Mahomes became the Chiefs' starting quarterback, the Ravens are 1-4 against Kansas City.

NEW DIGS When they relocated from San Diego after the 2016 season, the Chargers moved their headquarters into a temporary home in Orange County, specifically Costa Mesa, which sits about an hour from SoFi Stadium. Their preparations for 2024 and beyond will take place at a new training facility in El Segundo, just a short drive from SoFi, officially putting the Chargers in Los Angeles. The team is calling the place "The Bolt," which might or might not be a derivative of "The Star," the headquarters of the Dallas Cowboys.



LA LA LAND For a time after he was hired, head coach **Jim Harbaugh** stayed in an RV in Huntington Beach, directly across Pacific Coast Highway from the ocean. The experience allowed him to live out a fantasy as he mirrored the existence of Jim Rockford, a character played by James Garner in the 1970s television series "The Rockford Files," one of Harbaugh's all-time favorites. "Laying on your stomach, hands on your chin, elbows on the floor, looking at the palm trees and mountains, sun, ocean," recalled Harbaugh, who grew up mostly in Michigan. "'Wow, I want to be there someday.'"

IRON MAN One of the most trumpeted of Harbaugh's hires was Ben Herbert, the Chargers' executive director of player performance who formerly worked at Michigan. Herbert's passion and expertise are advantages, according to the new coach. "He has a great wife," Harbaugh said of Herbert. "He has two great kids. He has two dogs. He has a truck. But, from the hours of 6 a.m. to 5 p.m., he and his staff are going to be in that weight room with the energy to coach, and make them better. … It's anything and everything to make somebody a better football player."

SCOUTING THE CHARGERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP LOS ANGELES "I think the Justin Herbert trade rumors were one-sided. There's no way that Jim Harbaugh and Joe Hortiz were really going to trade a quarterback that good. … The Chargers were cap-strapped, and that's why they had to cut Mike Williams and trade Keenan Allen. It's time for Joshua Palmer and Quentin Johnston to step up. … Gus Edwards and J.K. Dobbins have a lot of familiarity with the Harbaugh way after playing for the Ravens and John Harbaugh. … Rashawn Slater has everything but height working in his favor at left tackle. Zion Johnson is looking like a smart draft pick now. .. As long as the defense has Joey Bosa and Khalil Mack, they're a threat to get after the quarterback. … Poona Ford should boost the run defense. He's short and stocky and tough to budge. … Harbaugh should put a real leadership stamp here. He's quirky, but players respond to him and play hard for him. … Hortiz and personnel executive Chad Alexander have great reputations and have known each other for two decades from their time in Baltimore. There's a lot of trust there. …Derwin James Jr. is long and fast and a hard hitter. … Asante Samuel Jr. got picked on too much last season. … The Chargers need to use this season to get their financial house in order. They can be a real factor in free agency next offseason."

KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 CHARGERS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
8	Duggan, Max	QB	6-1	207	1	TCU	D7-23	D7-LAC-23
10	Herbert, Justin	QB	6-6	236	4	Oregon	D1a-20	D1a-LAC-20
2	Stick, Easton	QB	6-1	224	5	North Dakota State	D5-19	D5-LAC-19

RUNNING BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
27	Dobbins, J.K.	RB	5-10	215	4	Ohio State	FA-Bal-24	D2-Bal-20
42	Dotson, Elijah	RB	5-9	202	1	Northern Colorado	FA-23	FA-LAC-23
4	Edwards, Gus	RB	6-1	238	6	Rutgers	FA-Bal-24	FA-Bal-18
34	Patterson, Jaret	RB	5-8	195	3	Buffalo	FA-24	FA-Was-21
28	Spiller, Isaiah	RB	6-1	215	2	Texas A&M	D4-22	D4-LAC-22

RECEIVERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
	Chark Jr., DJ	WR	6-4	205	6	LSU	FA-Car-24	D2-Jac-18
12	Davis, Derius	WR	5-8	165	1	TCU	D4-23	D4-LAC-23
81	Dissly, Will	TE	6-4	265	6	Washington	FA-Sea-24	D4-Sea-18
87	Fehoko, Simi	WR	6-4	218	3	Stanford	PS-Pit-23	D5-Dal-21
88	Hurst, Hayden	TE	6-4	250	6	South Carolina	FA-Car-24	D1a-Bal-18
1	Johnston, Quentin	WR	6-2	208	1	TCU	D1-23	D1-LAC-23
44	Mason, Ben	TE	6-3	265	1	Michigan	FA-24	D5-Bal-21
5	Palmer, Joshua	WR	6-1	210	3	Tennessee	D3a-21	D3a-LAC-21
89	Parham Jr., Donald	TE	6-8	237	4	Stetson	FA-20	FA-Det-20
84	Smartt, Stone	TE	6-4	226	2	Old Dominion	FA-22	FA-LAC-22

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
75	Bozeman, Bradley	C	6-5	325	6	Alabama	FA-Car-24	D6c-Bal-18
64	Jaimes, Brenden	OL	6-5	300	3	Nebraska	D5-21	D5-LAC-21
77	Johnson, Zion	G	6-3	316	2	Boston College	D1-22	D1-LAC-22
65	Laing, Brent	C	6-3	304	1	Minnesota-Duluth	FA-23	FA-NYJ-23
63	Linsley, Corey	C	6-3	301	10	Ohio State	FA-GB-21	D5a-GB-14
71	McFadden, Jordan	OL	6-2	303	1	Clemson	D5-23	D5-LAC-23
79	Pipkins III, Trey	T	6-6	307	5	Sioux Falls	D3-19	D3-LAC-19
68	Salyer, Jamaree	OL	6-4	325	2	Georgia	D6a-22	D6a-LAC-22
73	Sarell, Foster	T	6-6	322	2	Stanford	FA-21	FA-Bal-21
70	Slater, Rashawn	T	6-4	315	3	Northwestern	D1-21	D1-LAC-21

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
72	Clark, Jerrod	DL	6-3	334	1	Coastal Carolina	FA-23	FA-LAC-23
95	Ford, Poona	DL	5-11	310	6	Texas	FA-Buf-24	FA-Sea-18
56	Fox, Morgan	DL	6-3	275	7	Colorado St.-Pueblo	FA-22	FA-LAR-16
91	Hinton, Christopher	DL	6-4	310	1	Michigan	FA-22	FA-NYG-22
99	Matlock, Scott	DL	6-4	296	1	Boise State	D6-23	D6-LAC-23
93	Ogbonnia, Otito	DL	6-4	320	2	UCLA	D5-22	D5-LAC-22
69	Okoye, CJ	DL	6-6	315	1	None	FA-23	FA-LAC-23

LINEBACKERS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
90	Allen, Brevin	OLB	6-3	265	1	Campbell	FA-23	FA-LAC-23
97	Bosa, Joey	OLB	6-5	280	8	Ohio State	D1-16	D1-LAC-16
48	Dupree, Bud	OLB	6-4	269	9	Kentucky	FA-Atl-24	D1-Pit-15
	Dye, Troy	LB	6-3	225	4	Oregon	FA-Min-24	D4c-Min-20
92	Farmer II, Andrew	OLB	6-4	250	1	Lane	FA-23	FA-LAC-23
0	Henley, Daiyan	LB	6-0	225	1	Washington State	D3-23	D3-LAC-23
53	Lynch, Blake	LB	6-3	225	3	Baylor	FA-23	FA-Min-20
52	Mack, Khalil	OLB	6-3	269	10	Buffalo	T-Chi-22	D1-LV-14
31	Niemann, Nick	LB	6-3	234	3	Iowa	D6a-21	D6a-LAC-21
6	Perryman, Denzel	LB	5-11	240	9	Miami	FA-Hou-24	D2-LAC-15
94	Rumph II, Chris	OLB	6-2	244	3	Duke	D4-21	D4-LAC-21
59	Shelby, Ty	OLB	6-3	249	1	ULM	FA-22	FA-LAC-22
45	Tuipulotu, Tuli	OLB	6-3	266	1	USC	D2-23	D2-LAC-23

DEFENSIVE BACKS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
24	Finley, AJ	S	6-0	188	2	Ole Miss	FA-23	FA-LAC-23
7	Fulton, Kristian	CB	5-11	197	4	LSU	FA-Ten-24	D2-Ten-20
32	Gilman, Alohi	S	5-10	201	4	Notre Dame	D6-20	D6-LAC-20
23	Hankins, Matt	CB	5-11	185	1	Iowa	FA-23	FA-Atl-22
3	James Jr., Derwin	S	6-2	215	6	Florida State	D1-18	D1-LAC-18
33	Leonard, Deane	DB	6-0	195	2	Ole Miss	D7a-22	D7a-LAC-22
26	Samuel Jr., Asante	CB	5-10	180	3	Florida State	D2-21	D2-LAC-21
36	Taylor, Ja'Sir	DB	5-10	185	2	Wake Forest	D6b-22	D6b-LAC-22
38	Wilcox, Chris	CB	6-2	195	1	BYU	FA-23	D7-TB-21
22	Woods, JT	S	6-2	193	2	Baylor	D3-22	D3-LAC-22

SPECIALISTS		POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
11	Dicker, Cameron	K	6-1	216	2	Texas	FA-22	FA-LAR-22
47	Harris, Josh	LS	6-1	224	12	Auburn	FA-Atl-22	FA-Atl-12
16	Scott, JK	P	6-5	208	5	Alabama	FA-22	D5b-GB-18

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	5	Joshua Palmer	82	Brenden Rice (R)
WR	9	DJ Chark Jr.	1	Quentin Johnston
WR	15	Ladd McConkey (R)	12	Derius Davis
LT	70	Rashawn Slater	73	Foster Sarell
LG	77	Zion Johnson	71	Jordan McFadden
C	75	Bradley Bozeman	64	Brenden Jaimes
RG	79	Trey Pipkins III	68	Jamaree Salyer
RT	76	Joe Alt (R)	74	Tyler McLellan
TE	81	Will Dissly	88	Hayden Hurst
QB	10	Justin Herbert	2	Easton Stick
RB	4	Gus Edwards	27	J.K. Dobbins

DEFENSE

DL	56	Morgan Fox	98	Justin Eboigbe (R)
NT	95	Poona Ford	91	Christopher Hinton
DL	93	Otito Ogbonnia	99	Scott Matlock
OLB	52	Khalil Mack	45	Tuli Tuipulotu
ILB	6	Denzel Perryman	31	Nick Niemann
ILB	25	Junior Colson (R)	0	Daiyan Henley
OLB	97	Joey Bosa	48	Bud Dupree
CB	26	Asante Samuel Jr.	36	Ja'Sir Taylor
CB	7	Kristian Fulton	33	Deane Leonard
SS	3	Derwin James Jr.	22	JT Woods
FS	32	Alohi Gilman	24	AJ Finley

SPECIALISTS

K	11	Cameron Dicker	KR	12	Derius Davis
P	16	JK Scott	PR	12	Derius Davis

6.8

The Chargers allowed 6.8 adjusted net yards per passing attempt in 2023, third highest in the NFL.

CHARGERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Joe Alt	OT	6-8	322	Notre Dame
2.	Ladd McConkey	WR	6-0	185	Georgia
3.	Junior Colson	LB	6-3	247	Michigan
4.	Justin Eboigbe	DL	6-5	292	Alabama
5.	Tarheeb Still	CB	6-1	196	Maryland
5.	Cam Hart	CB	6-2	207	Notre Dame
6.	Kimani Vidal	RB	5-8	215	Troy
7.	Brenden Rice	WR	6-3	210	USC
7.	Cornelius Johnson	WR	6-3	208	Michigan

Jim Harbaugh's mission of bolstering the run game and line of scrimmage continued when the Chargers used their first pick on Joe Alt, all 6-foot-8 and 322 pounds of him. A left tackle in college, he'll transition to the right side opposite Pro Bowler Rashawn Slater, giving the Chargers what they hope will be their cornerstone tackles for seasons to come. Ladd McConkey should be a starter upon his arrival, his precise route-running something the Chargers targeted in trying to find a reliable option for Justin Herbert. Junior Colson is another potential immediate starter, his value increased by the fact he played in this same defensive system during his time at Michigan.

NFC PREDICTIONS

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH FOR THE FOUR DIVISIONS

NFC PLAYOFF SEEDS

1. San Francisco 49ers
2. Detroit Lions
3. Philadelphia Eagles
4. Tampa Bay Buccaneers
5. Green Bay Packers
6. Los Angeles Rams
7. Dallas Cowboys

WILD CARD WEEKEND

Lions over Cowboys

Rams over Eagles

Bucs over Packers

DIVISIONAL ROUND

49ers over Rams

Lions over Bucs

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

Lions over 49ers

SUPER BOWL LVIIII

Ravens over Lions

NFC EAST

1. Philadelphia EAGLES
2. Dallas COWBOYS
3. Washington COMMANDERS
4. New York GIANTS

NFC NORTH

1. Detroit LIONS
2. Green Bay PACKERS
3. Chicago BEARS
4. Minnesota VIKINGS

NFC SOUTH

1. Tampa Bay BUCCANEERS
2. Atlanta FALCONS
3. New Orleans SAINTS
4. Carolina PANTHERS

NFC WEST

1. San Francisco 49ERS
2. Los Angeles RAMS
3. Seattle SEAHAWKS
4. Arizona CARDINALS

NFC POWER RANKINGS

1. San Francisco 49ers
2. Detroit Lions
3. Los Angeles Rams
4. Philadelphia Eagles
5. Tampa Bay Buccaneers
6. Green Bay Packers
7. Dallas Cowboys
8. Seattle Seahawks
9. Chicago Bears
10. Atlanta Falcons
11. Minnesota Vikings
12. New Orleans Saints
13. Arizona Cardinals
14. Washington Commanders
15. Carolina Panthers
16. New York Giants

SUPERLATIVES

Offensive Player of the Year
CHRISTIAN McCAFFREY, 49ERS

Defensive Player of the Year
AIDAN HUTCHINSON, LIONS

Comeback Player of the Year
KIRK COUSINS, FALCONS

Offensive Rookie of the Year
CALEB WILLIAMS, BEARS

Defensive Rookie of the Year
JARED VERSE, RAMS

Coach of the Year
DAN CAMPBELL, LIONS

NFC COACHING CAROUSEL

HEAD COACHES

ATLANTA FALCONS

New: Raheem Morris

Old: Arthur Smith

Morris, a defensive coach by trade, has to navigate the most unusual quarterback situation in the NFL — high-priced veteran Kirk Cousins backed by first-round draft pick Michael Penix Jr., whose clock is ticking (he's 24). Morris is getting another head-coaching shot despite a career 21-38 record.

CAROLINA PANTHERS

New: Dave Canales

Old Frank Reich

Canales has just the youthful enthusiasm and fresh outlook to guide a reset in Carolina. His primary task this season: coax a sophomore leap in production and confidence from quarterback Bryce Young to set the tone for a playoff run in 2025.

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

New: Mike Macdonald

Old: Pete Carroll

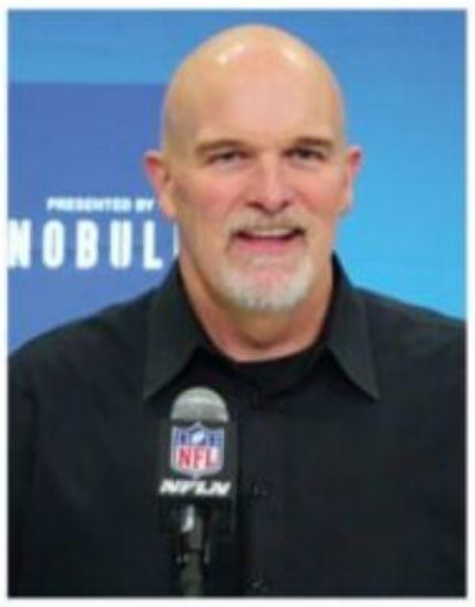
Macdonald has been immersed in a winning culture in Baltimore, and early reports from the Pacific Northwest are highly positive. The Seahawks probably have one more playoff run in them with Geno Smith before having to hit reset at quarterback.

WASHINGTON COMMANDERS

New: Dan Quinn

Old: Ron Rivera

By all rights, Quinn should have a Super Bowl win on his résumé (he was the head coach for the Falcons when they blew a 28-3 lead against New England in Super Bowl LI). He ran an effective defense in Dallas, although his unit was last seen getting torched at home for 48 points by the Packers in the wild-card round.



MORRIS: JOHN DAVID MERCER-USA TODAY SPORTS; CANALES: JIM DEDMON-USA TODAY SPORTS; MACDONALD: NATHAN RAY SEEBECK-USA TODAY SPORTS; ZIMMER: BRACE HEMMELGARN-USA TODAY SPORTS; MOORE: KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS; QUINN: KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS

COORDINATORS

ATLANTA FALCONS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Zac Robinson

Old: Dave Ragone

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Jimmy Lake

Old: Ryan Nielsen

CAROLINA PANTHERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Brad Idzik

Old: Thomas Brown

CHICAGO BEARS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

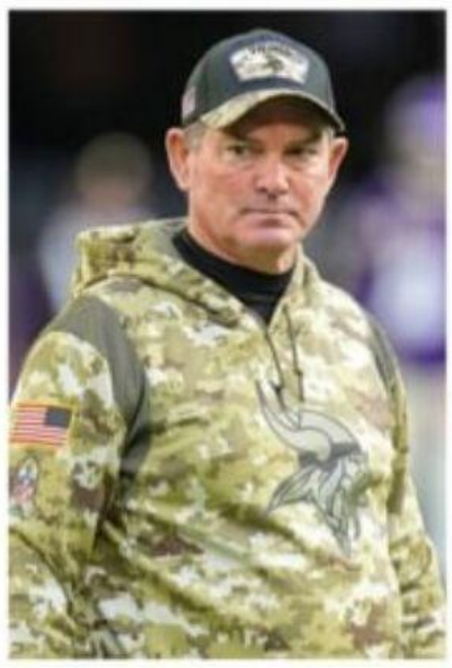
New: Shane Waldron

Old: Luke Getsy

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Eric Washington

Old: Alan Williams



DALLAS COWBOYS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Mike Zimmer

Old: Dan Quinn

GREEN BAY PACKERS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Jeff Hafley

Old: Joe Barry

LOS ANGELES RAMS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Chris Shula

Old: Raheem Morris

NEW ORLEANS SAINTS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Klint Kubiak

Old: Pete Carmichael

NEW YORK GIANTS

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Shane Bowen

Old: Wink Martindale

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Kellen Moore

Old: Brian Johnson

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Ryan Grubb

Old: Shane Waldron

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Aden Durde

Old: Clint Hurtt

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Liam Coen

Old: Dave Canales

WASHINGTON COMMANDERS

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Kliff Kingsbury

Old: Eric Bieniemy

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR

New: Joe Whitt Jr.

Old: Jack Del Rio

COWBOYS

NFC EAST FORECAST

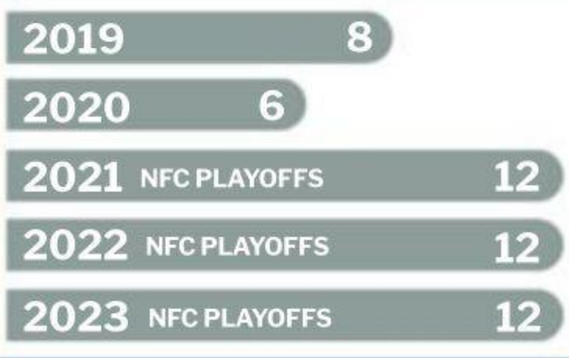
?

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	at Cleveland	4:25
Sept. 15	New Orleans	1:00
Sept. 22	Baltimore	4:25
Sept. 26	at N.Y. Giants	8:15
Oct. 6	at Pittsburgh	8:20
Oct. 13	Detroit	4:25
Oct. 20	BYE	
Oct. 27	at San Francisco	8:20
Nov. 3	at Atlanta	1:00
Nov. 10	Philadelphia	4:25
Nov. 18	Houston	8:15
Nov. 24	at Washington	1:00
Nov. 28	N.Y. Giants	4:30
Dec. 9	Cincinnati	8:15
Dec. 15	at Carolina	1:00
Dec. 22	Tampa Bay	8:20
Dec. 29	at Philadelphia	4:25
Jan. 4/5	Washington	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Mike McCarthy
Record With Team: 42-25
Career Record: 167-102-2
Offensive Coordinator: Brian Schottenheimer
Defensive Coordinator: Mike Zimmer
Special Teams Coordinator: John Fassel
Quarterbacks: Scott Tolzien
Run Game Coordinator/Running Backs: Jeff Blasko
Pass Game Coordinator/Wide Receivers: Robert Prince
Tight Ends: Lunda Wells
Offensive Line: Mike Solari
Defensive Run Game Coordinator: Paul Guenther
Defensive Line: Jeff Zgonina
Linebackers: Scott McCurley
Assistant Head Coach/Defensive Backs: Al Harris
Safeties: Cannon Matthews

Owner Jerry Jones teased Cowboys fans at the start of the offseason, proclaiming that the team would go "all-in" for the 2024 season. Then, the Cowboys did what they have done in free agency every offseason since 2013 — not much.

Linebacker Eric Kendricks and running back Royce Freeman were the only outside free agents signed by the Cowboys before the draft.

Dallas changed its modus operandi after making a big splash in 2012 with the signings of cornerback Brandon Carr, backup quarterback Kyle Orton and others. It has become a bit player in free agency since, relying on the draft to rebuild and reload.

The Cowboys have gone 106-73 since 2013, with six playoff appearances and only two losing seasons. However, they are only 3-6 in the postseason in the past 11 seasons.

So, Jones raised fans' hopes that maybe the Cowboys would do what the Rams did in 2021, pushing their chips to the middle of the table for a Super Bowl run. Instead, it was more of the same, and no amount of clarifying, walking-it-back or blaming the media by Jones consoled Cowboys fans.

They were left frustrated by another one-and-done in the 2023 postseason and a 28th season without a trip to the NFC Championship Game, much less the Super Bowl. They were left angry by the inaction that followed Jones' words.

On paper, the Cowboys have less talent now than they did in their last game, a blowout loss to the Packers at home in the wild-card round.

OFFENSE

In head coach Mike McCarthy's first season calling the plays for the Cowboys, Dak Prescott had his most successful campaign. He finished second in MVP voting behind Ravens quarterback Lamar Jackson and led the NFL with 36 touchdown passes, but he could be playing his final season with the Cowboys. The Cowboys traded for Trey Lance, the No. 3 overall pick of the 49ers in 2021, and he will compete with Cooper Rush for the backup job. Lance and Rush, though, also are scheduled for free agency in 2025. If Lance shows them anything in training camp and the preseason, he would cost the Cowboys less than Prescott and could be their starter in 2025.

The Cowboys' inactivity in free agency was most evident at the running back position. They came out of the draft without a starting-caliber running back on their roster, forcing them to reunite with Ezekiel Elliott. He was over the hill in 2023 with the Patriots, and unless the Cowboys trade for a running back, they will pay for not having a better option this season. Rico Dowdle, Freeman and Deuce Vaughn are the other options.

CeeDee Lamb became one of the top receivers in football last season when he earned All-Pro honors after a league-best 135 receptions for 1,749 yards and 12 touchdowns. Lamb, though, wants the Cowboys to pay him like one of the league's best receivers, so he skipped the team's voluntary offseason program to show his displeasure with contract talks. The Cowboys can't afford to play without him. Brandin Cooks arrived in a trade from the Texans as their No. 2 receiver last season, and he maintains that role this season. Jalen Tolbert did enough last season to replace Michael Gallup as the No. 3 receiver. McCarthy will work to find more inventive ways to use KaVontae Turpin on offense after he contributed 237 yards and four touchdowns on 140 offensive snaps last season.

The Cowboys drafted Luke Schoonmaker in the second round in 2023, but he made no starts and played only 31 percent of the offensive snaps. He ended

his rookie season with eight receptions for 65 yards and two touchdowns. They expect more from him this season. Jake Ferguson, a fourth-round pick in 2022, has established himself as a reliable target for Prescott. He was second on the team in receptions (71) and receiving yards (761) and scored five touchdowns. Peyton Hendershot is the team's third tight end.

It wasn't long ago that the team's offensive line was one of the best in the NFL. It's not anymore. It now could be the team's biggest weakness. Left guard Tyler Smith is the best player on the line after making his first Pro Bowl in 2023. The Cowboys have compared him to Hall of Famer Larry Allen for his versatility. Right guard Zack Martin is one of the best guards in NFL history and will become a first-ballot Hall of Famer five years after his career ends. He made All-Pro for the seventh time in 2023, but he is not as good as he was in his prime. Right tackle Terence Steele is serviceable, and rookie draft picks Cooper Beebe and Tyler Guyton are switching positions from college to start at center and left tackle, respectively.

TIM HEITMAN-USA TODAY SPORTS

DEFENSE

Mike Zimmer has replaced Dan Quinn as defensive coordinator after Quinn left to become head coach of the Commanders. He has a star to build around with edge rusher Micah Parsons having established himself as a top-three defensive player in his three seasons. He has 40.5 sacks, 89 quarterback hits and seven forced fumbles in his career already. DeMarcus Lawrence hasn't had a double-digit sack season since 2018, but he is underrated and underappreciated. He is in the final year of his contract, and the Cowboys drafted his replacement in the second round, getting Western Michigan's Marshawn Kneeland. Sam Williams, who has the potential but hasn't had the production in two seasons, is the top backup. The Cowboys went into the offseason seeking to be bigger and stronger on defense, especially in the interior of the line. They remained too porous up the middle because 2023 first-round pick Mazi Smith had a disappointing first season. He started only three games, played only 304 snaps and made only 14 tackles and one sack. The Cowboys expect more from him in Zimmer's defense, which is closer to what he did at the University of Michigan. He will have to earn a starting job with Chauncey Golston and Osa Odighizuwa currently penciled in as the starters.

Linebacker is the only position the Cowboys upgraded this offseason with the addition of Kendricks, who will play middle linebacker, and the return of DeMarvion Overshown, who missed his rookie season with a torn left ACL. Kendricks played for Zimmer from 2014-21, so he has the most experience in the new defensive coordinator's system. Overshown, a third-round pick last season, was on his way to earning a starting job when he injured his knee in a preseason game. Damone Clark started all 17 games last season and is expected to remain the starter on the weak side. Third-round pick Marist Liufau will contribute.

The Cowboys missed Trevon Diggs after he tore his ACL in practice only two games into the season. He has 18 interceptions since entering the league in 2020. Diggs will take some chances that sometimes lead to big plays for the opponent, but he makes up for that with more takeaways than touchdowns allowed. DaRon Bland took advantage of Diggs' absence to set an NFL record for most interceptions returned for touchdowns in a single season with five. He still will start opposite Diggs this season with Stephon Gilmore having departed in free agency. Jourdan Lewis returns at nickelback.

SPECIALISTS

The Cowboys have one of the best special teams in the league with long snapper Trent Sieg, kicker Brandon Aubrey, punter Bryan Anger and returner Turpin among the best at their respective positions. Aubrey was named first-team All-Pro last season with a nearly perfect showing in his NFL debut. Anger made the Pro Bowl in 2021 and 2023, and Turpin was a Pro Bowler in 2022.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Cowboys didn't extend McCarthy's contract after last season — his third consecutive 12-win season — putting him on the hottest of hot seats entering 2024. McCarthy will be expected to do more, but with less talent, to get an extension. He might even be under an unspoken edict to reach the NFC Championship Game, something that hasn't happened for the Cowboys since the 1995 season.

DAL

2023 RESULTS (12-5)

Sept. 10	at N.Y. Giants	W	40-0
Sept. 17	N.Y. Jets	W	30-10
Sept. 24	at Arizona	L	16-28
Oct. 1	New England	W	38-3
Oct. 8	at San Francisco	L	10-42
Oct. 16	at L.A. Chargers	W	20-17
Oct. 29	L.A. Rams	W	43-20
Nov. 5	at Philadelphia	L	23-28
Nov. 12	N.Y. Giants	W	49-17
Nov. 19	at Carolina	W	33-10
Nov. 23	Washington	W	45-10
Nov. 30	Seattle	W	41-35
Dec. 10	Philadelphia	W	33-13
Dec. 17	at Buffalo	L	10-31
Dec. 24	at Miami	L	20-22
Dec. 31	Detroit	W	20-19
Jan. 7	at Washington	W	38-10
Postseason			
Jan. 14	Green Bay	L	32-48

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	371.6	5	3
Rushing	112.9	14	8
Passing	258.6	3	2
Scoring	29.9	1	1
Third Down %	48.3	2	1
Points/Play	0.447	3	2

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	299.7	5	2
Rushing	112.4	16	8
Passing	187.4	5	2
Scoring	18.5	5	2
Interceptions	17	T8	5
Sacks	46	T13	4
Opp. Pts./Play	0.340	15	6
TO Differential	+10	T5	T3

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Dak Prescott	590	410	4,516	36	9
Cooper Rush	24	18	144	0	1

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Tony Pollard	252	1,005	4.0	6
Rico Dowdle	89	361	4.1	2
Dak Prescott	55	242	4.4	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
CeeDee Lamb	135	1,749	13.0	12
Jake Ferguson	71	761	10.7	5
Tony Pollard	55	311	5.7	0
Brandin Cooks	54	657	12.2	8
Michael Gallup	34	418	12.3	2

KICKING: Brandon Aubrey, 36-38 FGs, 49-52 PATs, 157 points
TACKLES: Damone Clark, 107; Markquese Bell, 94
SACKS: Micah Parsons, 14.0; Dorance Armstrong, 7.5
INTERCEPTIONS: DaRon Bland, 9; Stephon Gilmore, 2; Donovan Wilson, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

ON GUARD Cowboys executive vice president Stephen Jones has compared Tyler Smith to Hall of Famer Larry Allen. Allen played all but one position along the offensive line in his 12 seasons in Dallas, moving from right tackle (1994) to right guard (1995-97) to left tackle (1997-98) and finally to left guard (1999-03). The Hall of Famer earned All-Pro and Pro Bowl honors at left tackle in 1998, but his other six All-Pro honors and 10 Pro Bowl accolades came at guard. Smith, who spent most of his rookie season at left tackle with Tyron Smith injured, made the Pro Bowl for the first time in 2023 at left guard.

DAK PRESCOTT'S LAST HURRAH? Quarterback **Dak Prescott** has a $55.445 million cap hit that the Cowboys didn't reduce with a long-term deal, explaining why they were quiet in free agency. He has no-trade and no-tag clauses, so letting him play out his contract could lead to his departure in 2025. The Cowboys seem content to see what this year brings. He is only 2-5 in the postseason, with two home losses in the wild-card round over the past three seasons.

UNDER PRESSURE Head coach Mike McCarthy will enter 2024 on the hottest of hot seats as the Cowboys did not extend his contract. He instead will coach the final year of his five-year deal. It's the same thing the Cowboys twice did with Jason Garrett, who got an extension the first time and was replaced by McCarthy the second time. McCarthy, who is 43-28 in four seasons, including the postseason, changed agents this offseason. In fact, all the Cowboys' assistant coaches also are in the final year of their contracts.

HOMECOMING The Cowboys drafted Ezekiel Elliott in the first round in 2016, and he rushed for 8,904 yards and 71 touchdowns on 2,065 carries in seven seasons with the team. He also caught 305 passes for 2,336 yards and 12 touchdowns. Elliott, who re-signed with the Cowboys, is not the same back he once was. He had a career low in carries (184), rushing yards (642) rushing touchdowns (three), yards per carry (3.5), yards from scrimmage (955) and total touchdowns (five) during his one season with the Patriots. Yet, the Cowboys signed him as their RB1.

SCOUTING THE COWBOYS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP DALLAS "Dak Prescott has everything it takes to lead this team to a Super Bowl, but his playoff performances haven't met his regular-season gold standard. He's got to be better in clutch situations. … Bringing back Ezekiel Elliott is a bargain-hunting move. He's a few years past his prime. … CeeDee Lamb is how Jerry Jones is going to spend his millions. … Brandin Cooks quietly did a nice job as a complementary presence opposite Lamb. He gets open and in the end zone a lot in single coverage, exploiting those matchups with his 4.33 speed. … The Cowboys, even without Tyron Smith, should have a pretty solid offensive line. I like the Tyler Guyton addition and expect a lot from Tyler Smith, Brock Hoffman, Zack Martin and Terence Steele. … Tight end is solid with Jake Ferguson and Luke Schoonmaker. … Micah Parsons is the closest thing to Lawrence Taylor to hit the NFL in a long time. … DeMarcus Lawrence is still one of the better all-around defensive linemen in the NFL. … Osa Odighizuwa has a knack for slipping blocks. … Lot of new blood at linebacker with Eric Kendricks and Marist Liufau; it could take some time to build chemistry. … DaRon Bland set an NFL record with five interceptions returned for touchdowns last season. … The defense sorely missed cornerback Trevon Diggs when he injured his knee."

WM. GLASHEEN

2024 COWBOYS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
15 Lance, Trey	QB	6-4	226	3	North Dakota State	T-SF-23	D1-SF-21
4 Prescott, Dak	QB	6-2	228	8	Mississippi State	D4b-16	D4b-Dal-16
10 Rush, Cooper	QB	6-3	224	6	Central Michigan	FA-20	FA-Dal-17

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
Conner, Snoop	RB	5-10	222	2	Ole Miss	FA-24	D5-Jac-22
34 Davis, Malik	RB	5-10	205	2	Florida	FA-22	FA-Dal-22
Elliott, Ezekiel	RB	6-0	228	8	Ohio State	FA-NE-24	D1-Dal-16
23 Dowdle, Rico	RB	5-11	218	4	South Carolina	FA-20	FA-Dal-20
27 Freeman, Royce	RB	6-0	238	5	Oregon	FA-LAR-24	D3-Den-18
40 Luepke, Hunter	RB	6-1	245	1	North Dakota State	FA-23	FA-Dal-23
42 Vaughn, Deuce	RB	5-5	180	1	Kansas State	D6b-23	D6b-Dal-23

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
83 Brooks, Jalen	WR	6-1	203	1	South Carolina	D7-23	D7-Dal-23
3 Cooks, Brandin	WR	5-10	193	10	Oregon State	T-Hou-23	D1-NO-14
16 Cropper, Jalen	WR	5-11	180	1	Fresno State	FA-23	FA-Dal-23
85 Durden, David	WR	6-1	208	1	West Florida	FA-23	FA-Dal-23
48 Fant, Princeton	TE	6-2	250	1	Tennessee	FA-23	FA-Dal-23
87 Ferguson, Jake	TE	6-5	252	2	Wisconsin	D4-22	D4-Dal-22
89 Hendershot, Peyton	TE	6-4	250	2	Indiana	FA-22	FA-Dal-22
Johnson, Tyron	WR	6-1	193	3	Oklahoma State	FA-24	FA-Hou-19
88 Lamb, CeeDee	WR	6-2	197	4	Oklahoma	D1-20	D1-Dal-20
80 McMath, Racey	WR	6-3	224	3	LSU	FA-24	D6-Ten-21
86 Schoonmaker, Luke	TE	6-5	255	1	Michigan	D2-23	D2-Dal-23
81 Stephens, John	TE	6-6	245	1	Louisiana	FA-23	FA-Dal-23
1 Tolbert, Jalen	WR	6-1	200	2	South Alabama	D3-22	D3-Dal-22
9 Turpin, KaVontae	WR	5-7	155	2	TCU	FA-22	FA-Dal-22

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
75 Ball, Josh	T	6-8	320	3	Marshall	D4b-21	D4b-Dal-21
66 Bass, T.J.	G	6-4	315	1	Oregon	FA-23	FA-Dal-23
64 Bostick, Earl	T	6-6	315	1	Kansas	FA-23	FA-Dal-23
71 Edoga, Chuma	OL	6-4	315	5	USC	FA-Atl-23	D3b-NYJ-19
67 Hoffman, Brock	C	6-4	315	1	Virginia Tech	FA-22	FA-Cle-22
70 Martin, Zack	G	6-4	315	10	Notre Dame	D1-14	D1-Dal-14
68 Pankey, Adam	G	6-5	307	4	West Virginia	FA-23	FA-GB-17
76 Richards, Asim	T	6-4	315	1	North Carolina	D5-23	D5-Dal-23
65 Shepley, Dakoda	G	6-4	290	3	British Columbia	FA-23	FA-NYJ-18
73 Smith, Tyler	G/T	6-5	320	2	Tulsa	D1-22	D1-Dal-22
78 Steele, Terence	T	6-6	320	4	Texas Tech	FA-20	FA-Dal-20
79 Waletzko, Matt	T	6-8	320	2	North Dakota	D5a-22	D5a-Dal-22

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
98 Davis Jr., Carl	NT	6-5	335	9	Iowa	FA-23	D3-Bal-15
93 Fehoko, Viliami	DE	6-4	283	1	San Jose State	D4-23	D4-Dal-23
99 Golston, Chauncey	DE	6-5	285	3	Iowa	D3b-21	D3b-Dal-21
51 Johnson, Durrell	DE	6-3	260	1	Liberty	FA-23	FA-Dal-23
90 Lawrence, DeMarcus	DE	6-3	254	10	Boise State	D2-14	D2-Dal-14
97 Odighizuwa, Osa	DT	6-2	294	3	UCLA	D3a-21	D3a-Dal-21
11 Parsons, Micah	DE	6-3	250	3	Penn State	D1-21	D1-Dal-21
58 Smith, Mazi	DT	6-3	328	1	Michigan	D1-23	D1-Dal-23
54 Williams, Sam	DE	6-4	262	2	Ole Miss	D2-22	D2-Dal-22

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
14 Bell, Markquese	LB	6-2	218	2	Florida A&M	FA-22	FA-Dal-22
18 Clark, Damone	LB	6-2	245	2	LSU	D5c-22	D5c-Dal-22
57 Johnson, Buddy	LB	6-2	240	2	Texas A&M	FA-23	D4-Pit-21
50 Kendricks, Eric	LB	6-0	232	9	UCLA	FA-LAC-24	D2-Min-15
13 Overshown, DeMarvion	LB	6-3	230	1	Texas	D3-23	D3-Dal-23
91 Wheat, Tyrus	LB	6-2	263	1	Mississippi State	FA-23	FA-Dal-23
Wilson, Damien	LB	6-1	245	8	Minnesota	FA-24	D4-Dal-15

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
26 Bland, DaRon	CB	6-2	202	2	Fresno State	D5b-22	D5b-Dal-22
31 Butler, Josh	CB	6-0	186	1	Michigan State	FA-23	FA-Dal-23
7 Diggs, Trevon	CB	6-1	204	4	Alabama	D2-20	D2-Dal-20
29 Goodwin, C.J.	CB	6-3	195	8	California (PA)	PS-Cin-18	FA-Pit-14
28 Hooker, Malik	S	6-1	215	7	Ohio State	FA-21	D1-Ind-17
2 Lewis, Jourdan	CB	5-10	190	7	Michigan	D3-17	D3-Dal-17
24 Mukuamu, Israel	S	6-4	215	3	South Carolina	D6b-21	D6b-Dal-21
27 Redwine, Sheldrick	DB	6-0	195	4	Miami	FA-22	D4-Cle-19
37 Scott, Eric	DB	6-1	205	1	Southern Miss	D6a-23	D6a-Dal-23
30 Thomas, Juanyeh	S	6-1	215	1	Georgia Tech	FA-22	FA-Dal-22
6 Wilson, Donovan	S	6-0	205	5	Texas A&M	D6-19	D6-Dal-19
25 Wright, Nahshon	CB	6-4	200	3	Oregon State	D3c-21	D3c-Dal-21

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5 Anger, Bryan	P	6-3	214	12	California	FA-21	D3-Jac-12
17 Aubrey, Brandon	K	6-3	208	1	Notre Dame	FA-23	FA-Dal-23
44 Sieg, Trent	LS	6-3	240	6	Colorado State	FA-LV-23	FA-Bal-18

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	1	Jalen Tolbert	19	Ryan Flournoy (R)
WR	88	CeeDee Lamb	9	KaVontae Turpin
WR	3	Brandin Cooks	83	Jalen Brooks
LT	60	Tyler Guyton (R)	71	Chuma Edoga
LG	73	Tyler Smith	66	T.J. Bass
C	56	Cooper Beebe (R)	67	Brock Hoffman
RG	70	Zack Martin	75	Josh Ball
RT	78	Terence Steele	79	Matt Waletzko
TE	87	Jake Ferguson	86	Luke Schoonmaker
QB	4	Dak Prescott	10	Cooper Rush
RB		Ezekiel Elliott	23	Rico Dowdle

DEFENSE

DE	11	Micah Parsons	94	Marshawn Kneeland (R)
DT	97	Osa Odighizuwa	93	Viliami Fehoko Jr.
DT	58	Mazi Smith	99	Chauncey Golston
DE	90	DeMarcus Lawrence	54	Sam Williams
SLB	13	DeMarvion Overshown	35	Marist Liufau (R)
MLB	50	Eric Kendricks	14	Markquese Bell
WLB	18	Damone Clark	57	Buddy Johnson
CB	7	Trevon Diggs	41	Caelen Carson (R)
CB	26	DaRon Bland	2	Jourdan Lewis
SS	6	Donovan Wilson	24	Israel Mukuamu
FS	28	Malik Hooker	30	Juanyeh Thomas

SPECIALISTS

K	17	Brandon Aubrey	KR 9	KaVontae Turpin
P	5	Bryan Anger	PR 9	KaVontae Turpin

104

Dak Prescott attempted a league-high 104 red-zone passes, making him the only quarterback in the NFL to finish with 100 or more. He had a 27:2 TD:INT ratio on those attempts.

COWBOYS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Tyler Guyton	OT	6-7	328	Oklahoma
2.	Marshawn Kneeland	DE	6-3	268	Western Michigan
3.	Cooper Beebe	C	6-4	335	Kansas State
3.	Marist Liufau	LB	6-2	239	Notre Dame
5.	Caelen Carson	CB	6-0	195	Wake Forest
6.	Ryan Flournoy	WR	6-1	200	SE Missouri St.
7.	Nathan Thomas	OT	6-4	331	Louisiana
7.	Justin Rogers	DT	6-2	338	Auburn

The Cowboys went into the draft with holes at left tackle, running back, center and defensive tackle. They filled two of the four in the first three rounds. Tyler Guyton, who played right tackle at Oklahoma, will move to left tackle with the Cowboys. That allows the Cowboys to keep Pro Bowler Tyler Smith at left guard. Cowboys owner Jerry Jones made no secret of his desire to draft Texas' Jonathon Brooks, the top running back prospect, in the second round, but Brooks was gone before the Cowboys' second pick. Instead, Dallas drafted Western Michigan edge rusher Marshawn Kneeland. The Cowboys found a replacement for departed center Tyler Biadasz in Cooper Beebe. Notre Dame's Marist Liufau provides much-needed depth at linebacker with the retirement of Leighton Vander Esch.

NY GIANTS

NFC EAST FORECAST

4

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	Minnesota	1:00
Sept. 15	at Washington	1:00
Sept. 22	at Cleveland	1:00
Sept. 26	Dallas	8:15
Oct. 6	at Seattle	4:25
Oct. 13	Cincinnati	8:20
Oct. 20	Philadelphia	1:00
Oct. 28	at Pittsburgh	8:15
Nov. 3	Washington	1:00
Nov. 10	vs. Carolina*	9:30 a.m.
Nov. 17	BYE	
Nov. 24	Tampa Bay	1:00
Nov. 28	at Dallas	4:30
Dec. 8	New Orleans	1:00
Dec. 15	Baltimore	1:00
Dec. 22	at Atlanta	1:00
Dec. 28	Indianapolis	TBD
Jan. 4/5	at Philadelphia	TBD

*Allianz Arena, Munich, Ger.

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Brian Daboll
Record With Team: 15-18-1
Career Record: 15-18-1
Offensive Coordinator: Mike Kafka
Defensive Coordinator: Shane Bowen
Special Teams Coordinator: Michael Ghobrial
Pass Game Coordinator/Quarterbacks: Shea Tierney
Running Backs: Joel Thomas
Wide Receivers: Mike Groh
Tight Ends: Tim Kelly
Offensive Line: Carmen Bricillo
Defensive Line: Andre Patterson
Inside Linebackers: John Egorugwu
Outside Linebackers: Charlie Bullen
Defensive Pass Game Coordinator/DBs: Jerome Henderson
Safeties: Michael Treier

When Joe Schoen took over as general manager of the Giants, he knew he was looking at a long rebuilding process. Then the 2022 season happened — his team went 9-7-1 and even won a playoff game, and they looked like they were further along than he thought they could be.

So the next offseason, Schoen admittedly tried to "expedite" the process. And then the 2023 Giants went 6-11 and fell flat on their face.

So where are they now? That's a really good question as they enter Year 3 of the regime of Schoen and head coach Brian Daboll. They should be ready to contend, considering they're a year removed from signing quarterback Daniel Jones to a $160 million contract. But their actions — like trying to trade up for a new franchise quarterback — have made it seem like the rebuilding is still in an early phase.

The expectations are low for this middling team, but the pressure is definitely on Schoen and Daboll to get back to where they were a year ago. They have a roster filled with far too many holes, and if their moves don't start paying off quickly, the next phase of the rebuilding project may have to be done by somebody else.

OFFENSE

Is Jones the quarterback who carried the Giants to the playoffs in 2022 despite a generally mediocre cast around him? Or is he the disaster that he appeared to be in the few games he played last season before he injured his neck and tore his ACL?

The answer will not only determine the fate of the Giants' season, but it could also determine the fate of the GM and coach.

Jones now is the leader of an offense that no longer has Saquon Barkley to lean on, after Barkley left in free agency for the Philadelphia Eagles. Still, Jones might have a slightly better cast around him this year. Barkley was replaced with veteran David Singletary, a capable back who played well for Daboll in Buffalo. The Giants drafted the explosive Malik Nabers, who should be the No. 1 receiver Jones has never had. And the additions of veterans like Jon Runyan, Aaron Stinnie and Jermaine Eluemunor could finally stabilize their offensive line.

But it's still not a great cast — especially if tight end Darren Waller retires — which means Jones will have to exceed any ability he's shown so far. He also has to be healthy, which is no guarantee. His offseason rehab was on track, but nobody was promising that he would be ready for Week 1. It's entirely possible that the Giants will have to survive a few games playing with quarterback Drew Lock.

DEFENSE

Arguably, the Giants' two biggest offseason moves came on defense. The biggest was when they traded for defensive end Brian Burns, one of the best pass-rushers in the game. The other was when defensive coordinator Wink Martindale stormed out of the door after a heated argument with Daboll.

Martindale, who was very popular among his players, was replaced by former Titans defensive coordinator Shane Bowen. And while Bowen won't run the blitz-happy scheme that Martindale did, he could have a much better pass rush with the addition of Burns and the maturation of Kayvon Thibodeaux, who had 11.5 sacks last season.

If Azeez Ojulari can stay healthy, the Giants could have a really formidable

front, especially with Dexter Lawrence II (4.5 sacks) clogging up the middle.

They'll need that pass rush, though, because there are nothing but questions in the secondary. Cornerback Deonte Banks had a solid rookie season, but it's not clear who else can help him back there, especially after the Giants lost safety Xavier McKinney to free agency. They did draft safety Tyler Nubin in the second round and cornerback Dru Phillips in the third, but it could be a lot to ask of them to help carry a patchwork secondary as rookies.

The Giants know from their history that a strong pass rush can cover up a lot of defensive issues. That's what they seem to be counting on this year.

SPECIALISTS

One of the strengths of the Giants the last few seasons is that they had one of the best and most reliable kickers in Graham Gano. At times, he was the best thing about their offense, and maybe even their team MVP.

He's back, but now he's coming off knee surgery after he was limited to just eight games last season — during which he made a career-low 64.7 percent of his kicks (11-of-17). And he's 37, which isn't terribly old for a kicker until the knee surgery is factored in. If he's healthy, there are no worries. If not, the Giants will have to scramble.

They have no worries about their punter, Jamie Gillan — "The Scottish Hammer" — who shook off a shaky 2022 with a nice bounce-back season last year. He had a net average of 42.2 yards per kick and dropped more than a third of his punts (35) inside the 20. He should be reliable again.

What's really missing for the Giants, though, is a dynamic returner. Gunner Olszewski is a solid punt returner who did run one back for a touchdown last season. They will likely have a wide-open competition for a kickoff returner, though. They haven't been strong in that department in years.

GREGORY FISHER-USA TODAY SPORTS

FINAL ANALYSIS

Any analysis of the Giants' 2024 season starts and ends with this question: Is Jones any good? If he is, there is at least a chance that they could be a playoff contender this season — assuming Nabers is as good as advertised and the offensive line doesn't continue its decade-long futility.

But if Jones is not any good, then not only is this season likely to be a disaster, but the future won't be very bright, either. Because in 2025 the Giants are going to bring in a new quarterback — probably through the draft — and start all over again. And it's really unclear if Schoen can survive that kind of reset. Daboll almost certainly cannot.

If Jones is healthy and can approach his 2022 form, though, they have the makings of a solid team. Nabers could really change everything about their offense. And Singletary should be able to produce as much as Barkley, whose effectiveness behind the porous offensive line had been reduced in recent years.

And they really do have the tools for a strong pass rush, too. Burns could open a lot of room for Thibodeaux, Ojulari and even Lawrence to get to the quarterback. And that could help out a secondary that probably can't hold the defense together on its own.

It's a lot to ask, though. The Giants need Jones healthy and good, the offensive line fixes to work, Nabers to be a rookie star, the pass rush to explode. They'd need all of that and probably more — and that's just to get to .500 and have a shot at the playoffs. Their ceiling isn't much higher than that.

2023 RESULTS (6-11)

Sept. 10	Dallas	L	0-40
Sept. 17	at Arizona	W	31-28
Sept. 21	at San Francisco	L	12-30
Oct. 2	Seattle	L	3-24
Oct. 8	at Miami	L	16-31
Oct. 15	at Buffalo	L	9-14
Oct. 22	Washington	W	14-7
Oct. 29	N.Y. Jets (ot)	L	10-13
Nov. 5	at Las Vegas	L	6-30
Nov. 12	at Dallas	L	17-49
Nov. 19	at Washington	W	31-19
Nov. 26	New England	W	10-7
Dec. 11	Green Bay	W	24-22
Dec. 17	at New Orleans	L	6-24
Dec. 25	at Philadelphia	L	25-33
Dec. 31	L.A. Rams	L	25-26
Jan. 7	Philadelphia	W	27-10

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	280.0	29	15
Rushing	110.2	16	10
Passing	169.8	31	15
Scoring	15.6	30	15
Third Down %	30.2	30	16
Points/Play	0.252	30	15

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	361.7	27	14
Rushing	132.4	29	14
Passing	229.3	19	8
Scoring	23.9	26	12
Interceptions	18	T3	T3
Sacks	34	T28	T12
Opp. Pts./Play	0.373	25	11
TO Differential	+12	T1	1

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Tyrod Taylor	180	116	1,341	5	3
Tommy DeVito	178	114	1,101	8	3
Daniel Jones	160	108	909	2	6

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Saquon Barkley	247	962	3.9	6
Daniel Jones	40	206	5.2	1
Tyrod Taylor	38	197	5.2	0
Tommy DeVito	36	195	5.4	1
Matt Breida	55	151	2.7	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Wan'Dale Robinson	60	525	8.8	1
Darren Waller	52	552	10.6	1
Darius Slayton	50	770	15.4	4
Saquon Barkley	41	280	6.8	4
Daniel Bellinger	25	255	10.2	0
Jalin Hyatt	23	373	16.2	0

KICKING: Graham Gano, 11-17 FGs, 8-8 PATs, 41 points
TACKLES: Bobby Okereke, 149; Xavier McKinney, 116
SACKS: Kayvon Thibodeaux, 11.5; Jihad Ward, 5.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Xavier McKinney, 3; five tied with 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

BECKHAM 2.0? Rookie wide receiver **Malik Nabers** has drawn comparisons to former Giant Odell Beckham Jr., mostly because they both went to LSU. But they have another thing in common: a high degree of confidence. Nabers even made a $10,000 bet with his former college quarterback Jayden Daniels, drafted second overall by Washington, on which one of them would be the NFL's Offensive Rookie of the Year, although the pair later canceled the bet over concerns about the NFL's gambling policy.

LB DROUGHT There was a time when the Giants were known for their talented linebacking corps. In fact, it was a signature strength of their franchise. Now? Not so much, and with good reason. It has been 40 years now since the last time the Giants drafted a linebacker in the first round. It hasn't happened since 1984, when they selected Carl Banks third overall.

TOMMY CUTLETS With Daniel Jones hurt, rookie quarterback Tommy DeVito was forced to make six starts for the Giants last season — enough to spark the "Tommy Cutlets" craze. The Italian kid from New Jersey became a huge sensation, getting a sandwich named after him at a local deli and a beer named after him at a brewery. He even signed an endorsement deal with "Rao's Homemade sauce."

FRENEMIES The Giants' signing of guard Jon Runyan Jr. was fascinating because his father, former Eagles tackle Jon Runyan Sr., was a frequent foil of Giants great Michael Strahan during the 1990s and 2000s. They had some epic battles along the line of scrimmage, often filled with trash talk. But upon signing with his father's enemy, Runyan Jr. revealed that his dad and Strahan were really friends. Strahan even invited their entire family to his induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

SCOUTING THE GIANTS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP NEW YORK "Daniel Jones' seat is as hot as Brian Daboll's. .. It's an unforgiving city for losing sports teams. … Jones needs to seize this second chance and make the most out of it. He's got to take better care of the football and be more consistent and durable. If he fails, the Giants may blow this thing up next offseason. … Drew Lock is a really decent backup. … As the season went on, the Tommy DeVito novelty wore off. … Devin 'Motor' Singletary was a nice signing. He has great vision and deceptive speed and power. Hard to fill Saquon Barkley's cleats, but Singletary helps fill that void. … Malik Nabers could make Jones look like a much better quarterback. This guy gets wide open. … Darius Slayton is worth middle-tier receiver money. … Darren Waller has been contemplating retirement for a long time. It might be time for him to walk away. … This offensive line is really underwhelming. … Brian Burns makes this defense go. He's truly gifted. .. Dexter Lawrence II is a monster inside. … Bobby Okereke is one of the fastest linebackers in the league. … As athletic as Kayvon Thibodeaux is, he really hasn't lived up to expectations. … Cor'Dale Flott is quietly one of the better young corners in the league."

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2024 GIANTS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
15 DeVito, Tommy	QB	6-2	210	1	Illinois	FA-23	FA-NYG-23
8 Jones, Daniel	QB	6-5	230	5	Duke	D1-19	D1-NYG-19
2 Lock, Drew	QB	6-4	228	5	Missouri	FA-Sea-24	D2b-Den-19
Rourke, Nathan	QB	6-1	210	1	Ohio	W-NE-24	FA-Jac-23

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
23 Brightwell, Gary	RB	6-1	220	3	Arizona	D6-21	D6-NYG-21
35 Corbin, Jashaun	RB	5-11	200	1	Florida State	FA-23	FA-NYG-22
20 Gray, Eric	RB	5-10	211	1	Oklahoma	D5-23	D5-NYG-23
34 Jackson, Deon	RB	6-0	220	3	Duke	W-Cle-23	FA-Ind-21
25 Miller, Dante	RB	5-9	200	1	South Carolina	FA-24	FA-NYG-24
26 Singletary, Devin	RB	5-7	203	5	Florida Atlantic	FA-Hou-24	D3a-Buf-19

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
82 Bellinger, Daniel	TE	6-6	255	2	San Diego State	D4-22	D4-NYG-22
81 Boykin, Miles	WR	6-4	220	5	Notre Dame	FA-Pit-24	D3-Bal-19
83 Cager, Lawrence	TE	6-5	220	3	Georgia	FA-22	FA-NYJ-20
5 Cota, Chase	WR	6-3	209	1	Oregon	FA-24	FA-Det-23
6 Ford-Wheaton, Bryce	WR	6-3	220	1	West Virginia	FA-23	FA-NYG-23
18 Hodgins, Isaiah	WR	6-3	200	3	Oregon State	W-Buf-22	D6b-Buf-20
88 Houston, Dennis	WR	6-1	198	1	Western Illinois	FA-23	FA-Dal-22
13 Hyatt, Jalin	WR	6-0	185	1	Tennessee	D3-23	D3-NYG-23
84 Jackson, Tyree	TE	6-7	249	3	Buffalo	FA-23	FA-Buf-19
49 Jones, Ryan	TE	6-3	247	1	East Carolina	FA-23	FA-NYG-23
85 Manhertz, Chris	TE	6-6	260	8	Canisius	FA-Den-24	FA-Buf-14
87 McKenzie, Isaiah	WR	5-8	173	7	Georgia	FA-Ind-24	D5-Den-17
80 Olszewski, Gunner	WR	6-0	190	5	Bemidji State	FA-23	FA-NE-19
Robinson II, Allen	WR	6-2	220	10	Penn State	FA-Pit-24	D2-Jac-14
17 Robinson, Wan'Dale	WR	5-8	185	2	Kentucky	D2-22	D2-NYG-22
86 Slayton, Darius	WR	6-1	198	5	Auburn	D5-19	D5-NYG-19
89 Stoll, Jack	TE	6-4	247	3	Nebraska	FA-Phi-24	FA-Phi-21
12 Waller, Darren	TE	6-6	238	7	Georgia Tech	T-LV-23	D6-Bal-15

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
70 Cajuste, Yodny	T	6-5	310	5	West Virginia	FA-23	D3-NE-19
72 Eluemunor, Jermaine	T	6-4	330	7	Texas A&M	FA-LV-24	D5-Bal-17
75 Ezeudu, Joshua	OL	6-4	310	2	North Carolina	D3-22	D3-NYG-22
62 Mayfield, Jalen	G	6-5	319	3	Michigan	FA-23	D3-Atl-21
60 McKethan, Marcus	OL	6-7	335	2	North Carolina	D5-22	D5-NYG-22
77 Miles, Joshua	T	6-5	314	5	Morgan State	FA-23	D7-Ari-19
63 Morrissey, Jimmy	C	6-3	305	3	Pittsburgh	FA-24	D7-LV-21
73 Neal, Evan	T	6-7	340	2	Alabama	D1-22	D1-NYG-22
68 Nelson, Matt	T	6-7	315	4	Iowa	FA-Det-24	FA-Det-19
67 Pugh, Justin	G	6-5	311	11	Syracuse	FA-23	D1-NYG-13
76 Runyan, Jon	G	6-4	307	4	Michigan	FA-GB-24	D6a-GB-20
65 Schlottmann, Austin	C	6-6	300	5	TCU	FA-Min-24	FA-Den-18
61 Schmitz Jr., John M.	C	6-4	320	1	Minnesota	D2-23	D2-NYG-23
64 Stinnie, Aaron	G	6-3	312	6	James Madison	FA-TB-24	FA-Ten-18
78 Thomas, Andrew	T	6-5	315	4	Georgia	D1-20	D1-NYG-20

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
90 Anderson, Ryder	DL	6-6	280	2	Indiana	FA-22	FA-NYG-22
45 Basham, Boogie	DE	6-3	274	3	Wake Forest	T-Buf-23	D2-Buf-21
0 Burns, Brian	DE	6-5	250	5	Florida State	T-Car-24	D1-Car-19
98 Davidson, D.J.	DL	6-5	320	2	Arizona State	D5-22	D5-NYG-22
96 Horne, Timmy	DL	6-5	323	2	Kansas State	FA-23	FA-Atl-22
97 Lawrence II, Dexter	DL	6-4	340	5	Clemson	D1-19	D1-NYG-19
93 Nuñez-Roches, Rakeem	DL	6-2	305	10	Southern Miss	FA-TB-22	D6-KC-15
99 Phillips, Jordan	DT	6-6	341	9	Oklahoma	FA-Buf-24	D2-Mia-15
95 Riley, Jordon	DT	6-5	315	1	Oregon	D7-23	D7-NYG-23

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
49 Adams, Matthew	LB	6-0	230	6	Houston	FA-Cle-24	D7a-Ind-18
43 Beavers, Darrian	ILB	6-4	255	2	Cincinnati	D6-22	D6-NYG-22
52 Coughlin, Carter	ILB	6-3	240	4	Minnesota	D7-20	D7-NYG-20
49 Fox, Tomon	OLB	6-2	245	2	North Carolina	FA-22	FA-NYG-22
54 Johnson, Dyontae	ILB	6-2	230	1	Toledo	FA-23	FA-NYG-23
53 Martin, Jeremiah	OLB	6-3	265	1	Washington	FA-23	FA-Cle-23
41 McFadden, Micah	ILB	6-2	232	2	Indiana	D5-22	D5-NYG-22
51 Ojulari, Azeez	OLB	6-3	240	3	Georgia	D2-21	D2-NYG-21
58 Okereke, Bobby	ILB	6-2	235	5	Stanford	FA-Ind-23	D3-Ind-19
19 Simmons, Isaiah	ILB	6-4	238	4	Clemson	T-Ari-23	D1-Ari-20
5 Thibodeaux, Kayvon	OLB	6-5	258	2	Oregon	D1-22	D1-NYG-22
48 Whitley, Benton	OLB	6-3	260	2	Holy Cross	FA-23	FA-LAR-22

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3 Banks, Deonte	CB	6-2	200	1	Maryland	D1-23	D1-NYG-23
24 Belton, Dane	S	6-1	190	2	Iowa	D4-22	D4-NYG-22
28 Flott, Cor'Dale	CB	6-2	175	2	LSU	D3-22	D3-NYG-22
37 Hawkins III, Tre	CB	6-3	195	1	Old Dominion	D6-23	D6-NYG-23
38 Hayes, Kaleb	DB	6-0	195	1	BYU	FA-23	FA-Jac-23
30 Holmes, Darnay	CB	5-10	195	4	UCLA	D4-20	D4-NYG-20
44 McCloud, Nick	CB	6-0	193	3	Notre Dame	W-Buf-22	FA-Buf-21
21 Mills, Jalen	DB	6-0	200	8	LSU	FA-NE-24	D7a-Phi-16
39 Owens, Gervarrius	S	6-0	200	1	Houston	D7-23	D7-NYG-23
27 Pinnock, Jason	S	6-0	200	3	Pittsburgh	W-NYJ-22	D5c-NYJ-21
33 Robinson, Aaron	CB	6-1	195	3	UCF	D3-21	D3-NYG-21
36 Thomas-Oliver, Stan.	CB	6-0	190	3	FIU	FA-23	D7-Car-20

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
9 Gano, Graham	K	6-2	202	14	Florida State	FA-20	FA-Bal-09
6 Gillan, Jamie	P	6-1	207	5	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	FA-22	FA-Cle-19
59 Kreiter, Casey	LS	6-1	250	8	Iowa	FA-Den-20	FA-Dal-14

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR		Malik Nabers (R)	18	Isaiah Hodgins
WR	86	Darius Slayton	13	Jalin Hyatt
WR	17	Wan'Dale Robinson	87	Isaiah McKenzie
LT	78	Andrew Thomas	77	Joshua Miles
LG	64	Aaron Stinnie	75	Joshua Ezeudu
C	61	John Michael Schmitz Jr.	65	Austin Schlottmann
RG	76	Jon Runyan	60	Marcus McKethan
RT	73	Evan Neal	72	Jermaine Eluemunor
TE	12	Darren Waller	82	Daniel Bellinger
QB	8	Daniel Jones	2	Drew Lock
RB	26	Devin Singletary	20	Eric Gray

DEFENSE

DE	0	Brian Burns	55	Boogie Basham
DE	99	Jordan Phillips	98	D.J. Davidson
DT	97	Dexter Lawrence II	93	Rakeem Nuñez-Roches
OLB	5	Kayvon Thibodeaux	19	Isaiah Simmons
ILB	58	Bobby Okereke	49	Matthew Adams
ILB	41	Micah McFadden	52	Carter Coughlin
OLB	51	Azeez Ojulari	94	Tomon Fox
CB	3	Deonte Banks		Dru Phillips (R)
CB	28	Cor'Dale Flott	30	Darnay Holmes
S	27	Jason Pinnock	21	Jalen Mills
S		Tyler Nubin (R)	24	Dane Belton

SPECIALISTS

K	9	Graham Gano	KR 80	Gunner Olszewski
P	6	Jamie Gillan	PR 87	Isaiah McKenzie

31

The Giants tied for the NFL lead in takeaways at 31 — and none of those 31 forced turnovers came in the first four weeks of the season.

GIANTS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Malik Nabers	WR	6-0	200	LSU
2.	Tyler Nubin	S	6-2	210	Minnesota
3.	Dru Phillips	CB	5-11	180	Kentucky
4.	Theo Johnson	TE	6-6	264	Penn State
5.	Tyrone Tracy Jr.	RB	5-11	210	Purdue
6.	Darius Muasau	LB	6-0	234	UCLA

After trying to trade up for quarterback Drake Maye, the Giants settled for Malik Nabers, who should be their best wide receiver since Odell Beckham Jr. and the No. 1 type that Daniel Jones has never had. Nabers and tight end Theo Johnson could add some dynamite to the Giants' pop-gun offense. They also got much needed secondary help in the second and third rounds and a possible future replacement for the departed Saquon Barkley in the fifth in Theo Tracy Jr. The Giants got good value overall, though not taking an offensive lineman at any point was an odd choice.

PHI EAGLES

NFC EAST FORECAST

1

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 6	vs. Green Bay*	8:15
Sept. 16	Atlanta	8:15
Sept. 22	at New Orleans	1:00
Sept. 29	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Oct. 6	BYE	
Oct. 13	Cleveland	1:00
Oct. 20	at N.Y. Giants	1:00
Oct. 27	at Cincinnati	4:25
Nov. 3	Jacksonville	8:20
Nov. 10	at Dallas	4:25
Nov. 14	Washington	8:15
Nov. 24	at L.A. Rams	8:20
Dec. 1	at Baltimore	4:25
Dec. 8	Carolina	1:00
Dec. 15	Pittsburgh	4:25
Dec. 22	at Washington	1:00
Dec. 29	Dallas	4:25
Jan. 4/5	N.Y. Giants	TBD

*Arena Corinthians, São Paulo, Brazil

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2019	NFC PLAYOFFS	9
2020		4
2021	NFC PLAYOFFS	9
2022	SUPER BOWL RUNNER-UP	14
2023	NFC PLAYOFFS	11

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Nick Sirianni
Record With Team: 34-17
Career Record: 34-17
Offensive Coordinator: Kellen Moore
Defensive Coordinator: Vic Fangio
Special Teams Coordinator: Michael Clay
Passing Game Coordinator/Assoc. Head Coach: Kevin Patullo
Assistant Head Coach/Running Backs: Jemal Singleton
Wide Receivers: Aaron Moorehead
Tight Ends: Jason Michael
Offensive Line/Run Game Coordinator: Jeff Stoutland
Senior Defensive Assistant/Defensive Line: Clint Hurtt
Defensive Ends/Outside Linebackers: Jeremiah Washburn
Inside Linebackers: Bobby King
Cornerbacks: Roy Anderson
Defensive Backs: Christian Parker

By the end of the 2023 season, the Eagles were a mess. They turned a 10-1 start into a 1-5 finish and then were humbled, 32-9, by Tampa Bay in the playoffs. Head coach Nick Sirianni survived the epic collapse but enters the '24 campaign with two new coordinators and a bunch of questions about his new role as team "CEO."

The Birds are pretty much the same team that face-planted at the end of last year, and fans are wondering whether there will be better leadership, better defensive play and more consistency than the team showed in 2023. Thanks to the retirements of fixtures Jason Kelce and Fletcher Cox, some new locker room voices must emerge. And due to the trade of edge rusher Haason Reddick, the Eagles have some big questions to answer on the defensive line.

The organization believes in its stars, especially quarterback Jalen Hurts, even though there were rumblings last year of some discontent with his ability to relate to teammates. Free agency signings and draft choices will bring fortifications to some areas of need, and the Eagles look like NFC East contenders. But whether Sirianni can provide the necessary direction remains a question.

OFFENSE

Hurts threw for a career-high 3,858 yards last year and was named to the Pro Bowl, but he had as many interceptions — 15 — as he did the previous two seasons combined. As a result, his passer rating dipped, and he was not as potent a weapon during the second half of the campaign. His challenge this year is to cut down on turnovers and to be more consistent. He remains a threat to run and can put big pressure on a defense in many ways. He should be set up for success in new offensive coordinator Kellen Moore's system, which keeps defenses off balance.

The Eagles traded with Pittsburgh to acquire Kenny Pickett, who started the past two seasons for the Steelers but isn't a threat to take the starting job.

The big offseason acquisition is running back Saquon Barkley, signed away from the Giants. Barkley is a complete back who can run and catch well. If he stays healthy, he is the every-down player the Eagles need at the position. Kenneth Gainwell is a solid change-of-pace option out of the backfield and a good receiver. Rookie Will Shipley from Clemson is an all-purpose back and a strong receiver.

Any conjecture about A.J. Brown's future in town was squelched in late April when the Eagles signed the Pro Bowl receiver — who caught a career-high 106 passes last season — to a three-year extension, with $84 million guaranteed. He's dangerous in all areas of the passing game. Although DeVonta Smith's reception total dropped to 81 last year, he has proven to be a deep threat and valuable target on mid-range throws, too.

After catching 63 balls with the Giants in 2022, Parris Campbell snared only 20 last season. The Eagles hope he can step forward as a third receiver, but they drafted Ainias Smith and Johnny Wilson for depth and competition and signed solid veteran DeVante Parker. Tight end Dallas Goedert is a consistent weapon, but there isn't much proven production behind him. Wilson's size could make him a tight end option.

Losing Kelce at center is huge, but the Birds should be strong again up front — if they can stay healthy. Cam Jurgens moves from guard to the pivot and has potential, but he's not Kelce. The tackle tandem of Lane Johnson and Jordan Mailata is as good as it gets, and Landon Dickerson has become a top-flight guard. The question is second-year man Tyler Steen, a third-round pick in 2023, who will

JALEN HURTS
QUARTERBACK

BRAD MILLS-USA TODAY SPORTS

play the other guard spot. There is not much proven depth behind this quintet beyond former Jet Mekhi Becton, a veteran who should be a solid third tackle..

DEFENSE

Only six other teams gave up more total yards last year than the Eagles, who were particularly poor against the pass, giving up the second-most yards and touchdowns through the air. The trouble was a combination of a weaker pass rush, which generated 43 sacks after registering 70 a year before, and a porous secondary, which allowed opposing quarterbacks to complete 65.2 percent of their throws. That's why Sirianni hired Vic Fangio, a respected coordinator whose defenses are versatile and can confuse opposing quarterbacks.

The Eagles addressed the secondary in free agency and the draft, re-signing safety C.J. Gardner-Johnson and drafting corner Quinyon Marshall and nickel Cooper DeJean. Expect Marshall to start right away ahead of James Bradberry, who regressed significantly last year, with Darius Slay in need of improvement on the other side. Reed Blankenship should be the other starting safety. It will be interesting to see how much nickel Avonte Maddox, who missed most of last year with a torn pectoral muscle, and corner Isaiah Rodgers, reinstated after being suspended last year for gambling, can help.

Trading Reddick surprised many, especially after the big 2022 season he had. The Eagles signed former Jet Bryce Huff, who had 10 sacks last year but was on the field for just 42 percent of the defensive snaps. Expect fourth-year man Milton Williams to see plenty of time at one end spot, but he had just 0.5 sacks last year. Veteran Brandon Graham is back for another year and can still create some havoc, while Josh Sweat is a solid outside rusher.

Inside, it's time for Jordan Davis to be a consistent force, while second-year man Jalen Carter has plenty of talent but ran out of gas last year. The Eagles hope free-agent signee PJ Mustipher can provide some depth.

The Eagles were particularly vulnerable at linebacker last year and hope former Buccaneer Devin White can team with Nakobe Dean in a productive interior pairing. Rookie Jeremiah Trotter Jr., son of a former Eagle standout, will fight for time. Fangio's defenses create plenty of opportunities for linebackers.

SPECIALISTS

Jake Elliott had perhaps his best season in 2023, connecting on 30-of-32 attempts and tying his career long of 61 yards. His 59-yarder that tied the game at the end of regulation in the rain and slop against the Bills was one of the NFL's best last year.

In his first season with the Eagles, Braden Mann was seventh in the league with a 49.8-yard average, and his 43.8-yard net was good for fourth. Expect to see DeJean get plenty of work in the return game, along with fellow rookie Smith, a burner.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Eagles have plenty of talent throughout the roster and are definitely among the NFC's best teams. The question is whether Sirianni can provide the vision at the top as a team CEO that will allow for the best possible results.

Adding Barkley to a loaded set of skill-position players was inspired, but Hurts must avoid turnovers, and the line has to remain healthy.

Even if the Birds score a bunch of points, they can't have a reprise of last year's defensive performance. The secondary additions look promising, but it's unlikely the team will have a savage pass rush, no matter how good Fangio is at deploying his personnel. There could be some shootouts.

This is a fascinating team that could compete for the Super Bowl or wallow again with issues that don't always have to do with talent or scheme. Expect an interesting season and at least a playoff berth.

PHI

2023 RESULTS (11-6)

Sept.	10	at New England	W	25-20
Sept.	14	Minnesota	W	34-28
Sept.	25	at Tampa Bay	W	25-11
Oct.	1	Washington (ot)	W	34-31
Oct.	8	at L.A. Rams	W	23-14
Oct.	15	at N.Y. Jets	L	14-20
Oct.	22	Miami	W	31-17
Oct.	29	at Washington	W	38-31
Nov.	5	Dallas	W	28-23
Nov.	20	at Kansas City	W	21-17
Nov.	26	Buffalo (ot)	W	37-34
Dec.	3	San Francisco	L	19-42
Dec.	10	at Dallas	L	13-33
Dec.	17	at Seattle	L	17-20
Dec.	25	N.Y. Giants	W	33-25
Dec.	31	Arizona	L	31-35
Jan.	7	at N.Y. Giants	L	10-27
Postseason				
Jan.	15	at Tampa Bay	L	9-32

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	354.4	8	5
Rushing	128.8	8	5
Passing	225.5	16	9
Scoring	25.5	7	4
Third Down %	48.0	3	2
Points/Play	0.379	8	5

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	356.1	26	13
Rushing	103.4	10	6
Passing	252.7	31	15
Scoring	25.2	30	14
Interceptions	9	T25	12
Sacks	43	T19	T6
Opp. Pts./Play	0.392	29	13
TO Differential	-10	27	13

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Jalen Hurts	538	352	3,858	23	15
Marcus Mariota	23	15	164	1	1

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
D'Andre Swift	229	1,049	4.6	5
Jalen Hurts	157	605	3.9	15
Kenneth Gainwell	84	364	4.3	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
A.J. Brown	106	1,456	13.7	7
DeVonta Smith	81	1,066	13.2	7
Dallas Goedert	59	592	10.0	3
D'Andre Swift	39	214	5.5	1
Kenneth Gainwell	30	183	6.1	0

KICKING: Jake Elliott, 30-32 FGs, 45-46 PATs, 135 points
TACKLES: Reed Blankenship, 108; Nicholas Morrow, 93
SACKS: Haason Reddick, 11.0; Josh Sweat, 6.5
INTERCEPTIONS: C.J. Gardner-Johnson, 6; James Bradberry, 3; Darius Slay, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

BRAZILIAN VACATION The Eagles will take on Green Bay in the first-ever NFL game from Brazil. The two teams will open their 2024 season on Sept. 6 at Corinthians Arena in Sao Paulo. It will be the second game of the year — the Chiefs and 49ers kick things off a day earlier on U.S. turf — and it will be considered a home game for the Birds.

A LEGEND SAYS GOOD-BYE Jason Kelce's retirement speech in early March was a perfect microcosm of his career. It was emotional, funny, profane and just plain excellent. The seven-time Pro Bowler, who was also a six-time first-team All-Pro choice, became the most recognizable Eagle over the past several years, thanks to his outstanding play, his leadership and his ability to relate to Philadelphia fans.

ACTION MAN By the time the 2024 NFL Draft was over, Eagles GM Howie Roseman had made eight trades, tying the 2018 Patriots and 2023 Texans for the most since 1990. The Birds have nine picks in the 2025 draft, which is thought to be particularly deep. The large number of draft choices will also help should the NFL dock the team one because of allegations of tampering with **Saquon Barkley**. Philadelphia has been accused of reaching out to the former Giants running back before the start of free agency.

THE NEXT GENERATION One of the best moments of the draft for the Eagles came when Roseman had the opportunity to call Clemson linebacker Jeremiah Trotter Jr. and tell him the team would be selecting him in the fifth round. Trotter's father had played middle linebacker for the Eagles for eight seasons (1998-2001; '04-06; '09) and was named to four Pro Bowls. During the call, Roseman told Trotter that choosing him was "just like it's meant to be." Eagles owner Jeffrey Lurie, who has known Trotter since he was a young child, became emotional when speaking to the linebacker and recalled Trotter's mother, who passed away in February 2023 after fighting breast cancer. Lurie told Trotter that he "loved his mother." Expect Trotter to wear number 54, the same number his "Axe Man" father donned with the team.

SCOUTING THE EAGLES

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP PHILADELPHIA "Jalen Hurts took a definite step back last season in a way that mirrored the entire overall decline of the team. Is the league figuring him out? … Saquon Barkley should fix the running game. … The Eagles' doubly expensive investment in wide receivers A.J. Brown and DeVonta Smith should pay off. .. Dallas Goedert is more of a blocker than a receiver. … I get why Howie Roseman paid Jordan Mailata so much. The improvement he's made under Jeff Stoutland's tutelage is remarkable, and the guy is gigantic. … There isn't a better right tackle out there than Lane Johnson. … Jordan Davis has been mildly disappointing; so has Nakobe Dean so far after excelling at Georgia. … Bryce Huff gives the pass rush a real boost is my prediction. … Nolan Smith has been underwhelming so far. … Got to like this secondary. They're loaded with playmakers with Darius Slay, rookies Quinyon Mitchell and Cooper DeJean and safety C.J. Gardner-Johnson. … Off the bench, Josh Sweat is an ideal situational pass-rusher. … Everyone knows that Nick Sirianni is on the hot seat. There's no way that ownership lets Howie take the fall, if this season goes south again."

KYLE ROSS-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 EAGLES VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16 Grier, Will	QB	6-1	220	5	West Virginia	FA-LAC-24	D3-Car-19
1 Hurts, Jalen	QB	6-1	223	4	Oklahoma	D2-20	D2-Phi-20
19 McKee, Tanner	QB	6-6	231	1	Stanford	D6-23	D6-Phi-23
7 Pickett, Kenny	QB	6-3	220	2	Pittsburgh	T-Pit-24	D1-Pit-22
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
26 Barkley, Saquon	RB	6-0	232	6	Penn State	FA-NYG-24	D1-NYG-18
35 Davis-Price, Tyrion	RB	6-1	219	2	LSU	FA-24	D3-SF-22
14 Gainwell, Kenneth	RB	5-9	200	3	Memphis	D5-21	D5-Phi-21
38 Nichols, Lew	RB	5-10	220	1	Central Michigan	FA-23	D7-GB-23
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
82 Allen, Devon	WR	6-1	190	1	Oregon	FA-22	FA-Phi-22
11 Brown, A.J.	WR	6-1	226	5	Ole Miss	T-Ten-22	D2-Ten-19
81 Calcaterra, Grant	TE	6-4	240	2	SMU	D6b-22	D6b-Phi-22
80 Campbell, Parris	WR	6-1	205	5	Ohio State	FA-NYG-24	D2-Ind-19
18 Covey, Britain	WR	5-8	173	2	Utah	FA-22	FA-Phi-22
82 Davis, Shaquan	WR	6-5	215	1	South Carolina St.	FA-24	FA-NO-23
88 Goedert, Dallas	TE	6-5	256	6	South Dakota St.	D2-18	D2-Phi-18
46 Harris, Jacob	WR	6-5	211	3	UCF	FA-24	D4-LAR-21
84 Jenkins, E.J.	TE	6-6	245	1	Georgia Tech	FA-24	FA-NYJ-23
86 Ngata, Joseph	WR	6-3	217	1	Clemson	FA-23	FA-Phi-23
85 Okwuegbunam, Albert	TE	6-5	258	4	Missouri	T-Den-23	D4-Den-20
13 Parker, DeVante	WR	6-3	215	9	Louisville	FA-NE-24	D1-Mia-15
6 Smith, DeVonta	WR	6-0	170	3	Alabama	D1-21	D1-Phi-21
83 Togiai, Noah	TE	6-4	244	2	Oregon State	FA-23	FA-Phi-20
87 Uzomah, C.J.	TE	6-6	260	9	Auburn	FA-NYJ-24	D5-Cin-15
89 Watkins, Austin	WR	6-3	210	1	UAB	FA-24	FA-SF-21
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
77 Becton, Mekhi	T	6-7	363	4	Louisville	FA-NYJ-24	D1-NYJ-20
73 Clark, Le'Raven	T	6-5	311	8	Texas Tech	FA-23	D3-Ind-16
69 Dickerson, Landon	G	6-6	332	3	Alabama	D2-21	D2-Phi-21
77 Hennessy, Matt	C/G	6-4	309	4	Temple	FA-Atl-24	D3-Atl-20
74 Johnson, Fred	T	6-7	326	5	Florida	FA-22	FA-Pit-19
65 Johnson, Lane	T	6-6	325	11	Oklahoma	D1-13	D1-Phi-13
51 Jurgens, Cam	C/G	6-3	303	2	Nebraska	D2-22	D2-Phi-22
72 Kinnard, Darian	T	6-5	322	1	Kentucky	FA-24	D5-KC-22
68 Mailata, Jordan	T	6-8	365	6	None	D7-18	D7-Phi-18
66 Poe, Jason	G	6-1	300	1	Mercer	FA-24	FA-SF-22
56 Steen, Tyler	G/T	6-6	321	1	Alabama	D3a-23	D3a-Phi-23
64 Toth, Brett	T/G	6-6	304	5	Army	FA-23	FA-Phi-19
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
59 Booker, Thomas	DT	6-3	301	2	Stanford	FA-23	D5-Hou-22
98 Carter, Jalen	DT	6-3	314	1	Georgia	D1a-23	D1a-Phi-23
90 Davis, Jordan	DT	6-6	336	2	Georgia	D1-22	D1-Phi-22
75 Jackson, Tarron	DE	6-2	254	3	Coastal Carolina	D6b-21	D6b-Phi-21
78 Mustipher, P.J.	DT	6-4	315	1	Penn State	FA-NO-24	FA-Den-23
72 Ojomo, Moro	DL	6-3	292	1	Texas	D7-23	D7-Phi-23
95 Tuipulotu, Marlon	DT	6-2	307	3	USC	D6a-21	D6a-Phi-21
93 Williams, Milton	DL	6-3	290	3	Louisiana Tech	D3-21	D3-Phi-21
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
53 Baun, Zack	LB	6-3	225	4	Wisconsin	FA-NO-24	D3a-NO-20
42 Burks, Oren	LB	6-3	233	6	Vanderbilt	FA-SF-24	D3-GB-18
17 Dean, Nakobe	LB	5-11	231	2	Georgia	D3-22	D3-Phi-22
55 Graham, Brandon	LB	6-2	265	14	Michigan	D1-10	D1-Phi-10
0 Huff, Bryce	LB	6-3	255	4	Memphis	FA-NYJ-24	FA-NYJ-20
48 Johnson, Patrick	LB	6-2	248	3	Tulane	D7-21	D7-Phi-21
46 Lewis, Terrell	LB	6-5	262	4	Alabama	FA-24	D3-LAR-20
52 Okwara, Julian	LB	6-4	239	4	Notre Dame	FA-24	D3-Det-20
47 Smith, Brandon	LB	6-3	240	2	Penn State	FA-23	D4-Car-22
3 Smith, Nolan	LB	6-2	238	1	Georgia	D1b-23	D1b-Phi-23
94 Sweat, Josh	LB	6-5	265	6	Florida State	D4b-18	D4b-Phi-18
57 VanSumeren, Ben	LB	6-2	231	1	Michigan State	FA-23	FA-Phi-23
45 White, Devin	LB	6-0	237	5	LSU	FA-TB-24	D1-TB-19
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
32 Blankenship, Reed	S	6-1	203	2	Middle Tennessee	FA-22	FA-Phi-22
24 Bradberry, James	CB	6-1	212	8	Samford	FA-NYG-22	D2-Car-16
21 Brown, Sydney	S	5-10	211	1	Illinois	D3b-23	D3b-Phi-23
8 Gardner-Johnson, C.J.	S	5-11	208	5	Florida	FA-Det-24	D4-NO-19
43 Garner, Mekhi	CB	6-2	212	1	LSU	FA-23	FA-Phi-23
37 Goodrich, Mario	CB	6-0	186	1	Clemson	FA-22	FA-Phi-22
31 Hall, Tyler	CB	5-10	190	4	Wyoming	FA-LV-24	FA-Atl-20
28 Jobe, Josh	CB	5-11	190	2	Alabama	FA-22	FA-Phi-22
29 Maddox, Avonte	CB	5-9	184	6	Pittsburgh	D4a-18	D4a-Phi-18
36 McCollum, Tristin	S	6-3	195	1	Sam Houston	FA-23	FA-Hou-22
27 McPhearson, Zech	CB	5-11	191	3	Texas Tech	D4-21	D4-Phi-21
39 Ricks, Eli	CB	6-2	188	1	Alabama	FA-23	FA-Phi-23
22 Ringo, Kelee	CB	6-2	207	1	Georgia	D4-23	D4-Phi-23
34 Rodgers, Isaiah	CB	5-10	176	3	Massachusetts	FA-23	D6-Ind-20
2 Slay, Darius	CB	6-0	190	11	Mississippi State	T-Det-20	D2-Det-13
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
4 Elliott, Jake	K	5-9	167	7	Memphis	PS-Cin-17	D5-Cin-17
45 Lovato, Rick	LS	6-2	249	7	Old Dominion	FA-16	FA-Chi-15
10 Mann, Braden	P	5-11	198	4	Texas A&M	FA-23	D6-NYJ-20

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	6	DeVonta Smith	13	DeVante Parker
WR	11	A.J. Brown	89	Johnny Wilson (R)
WR	80	Parris Campbell	82	Ainias Smith (R)
LT	68	Jordan Mailata	74	Fred Johnson
LG	69	Landon Dickerson	79	Trevor Keegan (R)
C	51	Cam Jurgens	63	Dylan McMahon (R)
RG	56	Tyler Steen	77	Matt Hennessy
RT	65	Lane Johnson	77	Mekhi Becton
TE	88	Dallas Goedert	81	Grant Calcaterra
QB	1	Jalen Hurts	7	Kenny Pickett
RB	26	Saquon Barkley	14	Kenneth Gainwell

DEFENSE

DE	93	Milton Williams	97	Moro Ojomo
NT	90	Jordan Davis	78	PJ Mustipher
DT	98	Jalen Carter	95	Marlon Tuipulotu
OLB	0	Bryce Huff	55	Brandon Graham
ILB	17	Nakobe Dean	54	Jeremiah Trotter Jr. (R)
ILB	45	Devin White	42	Oren Burks
OLB	94	Josh Sweat	3	Nolan Smith Jr.
CB	2	Darius Slay Jr.	22	Kelee Ringo
CB	30	Quinyon Mitchell (R)	24	James Bradberry IV
FS	32	Reed Blankenship	43	Mekhi Garner
SS	8	C.J. Gardner-Johnson	21	Sydney Brown

SPECIALISTS

K	4	Jake Elliott	KR 33	Cooper DeJean (R)
P	10	Braden Mann	PR 33	Cooper DeJean (R)

7.4

The Eagles defense maintained a 7.4 percent Defense-adjusted Value over Average (DVOA) under Sean Desai's watch (25th) but cratered to a league-worst 35.1 percent defensive DVOA for their last three games after replacing him with Matt Patricia.

EAGLES IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Quinyon Mitchell	CB	6-0	196	Toledo
2.	Cooper DeJean	CB	6-1	205	Iowa
3.	Jalyx Hunt	EDGE	6-4	248	Houston Christian
4.	Will Shipley	RB	5-11	210	Clemson
5.	Ainias Smith	WR	5-9	191	Texas A&M
5.	Jeremiah Trotter Jr.	LB	6-0	230	Clemson
5.	Trevor Keegan	G	6-5	308	Michigan
6.	Johnny Wilson	WR	6-6	237	Florida State
6.	Dylan McMahon	C/G	6-3	295	NC State

Quinyon Mitchell and Cooper DeJean should upgrade the shaky secondary, and don't be surprised if both of them are starters right away (DeJean as a nickel). Jalyx Hunt has great physical tools on the edge and will have the opportunity to learn behind some veterans. Jeremiah Trotter Jr. plays with a high motor and could see time right away in a thin linebacking crew. Will Shipley should be a solid all-purpose back who can catch and carry, and Trevor Keegan and Dylan McMahon add needed O-line depth. Ainias Smith is a burner who should be an immediate return weapon.

COMMANDERS

NFC EAST FORECAST

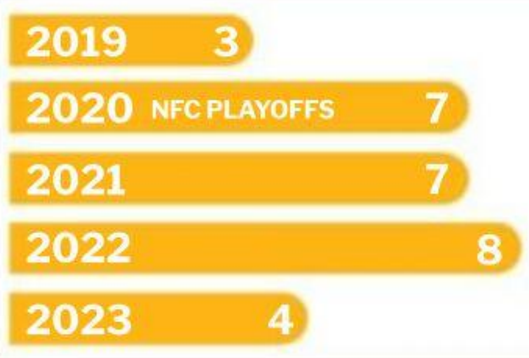
3

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	at Tampa Bay	4:25
Sept. 15	N.Y. Giants	1:00
Sept. 23	at Cincinnati	8:15
Sept. 29	at Arizona	4:05
Oct. 6	Cleveland	1:00
Oct. 13	at Baltimore	1:00
Oct. 20	Carolina	4:05
Oct. 27	Chicago	1:00
Nov. 3	at N.Y. Giants	1:00
Nov. 10	Pittsburgh	1:00
Nov. 14	at Philadelphia	8:15
Nov. 24	Dallas	1:00
Dec. 1	Tennessee	1:00
Dec. 8	BYE	
Dec. 15	at New Orleans	1:00
Dec. 22	Philadelphia	1:00
Dec. 28	Atlanta	TBD
Jan. 4/5	at Dallas	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Dan Quinn
Record With Team: First season
Career Record: 43-42
Assistant Head Coach/Offensive Coordinator: Kliff Kingsbury
Defensive Coordinator: Joe Whitt Jr.
Special Teams Coordinator: Larry Izzo
Assistant Head Coach/Offensive Pass Game Coordinator: Brian Johnson
Quarterbacks: Tavita Pritchard
Run Game Coordinator/Running Backs: Anthony Lynn
Wide Receivers: Bobby Engram
Tight Ends: David Raih
Offensive Line: Bobby Johnson
Defensive Line: Darryl Tapp
Linebackers: Ken Norton Jr.
Defensive Pass Game Coordinator: Jason Simmons
Defensive Backs: Tommy Donatell

Coming off a seventh-straight non-winning season, the Commanders enter 2024 with a new head coach (Dan Quinn), a new general manager (Adam Peters) and a new quarterback (No. 2 overall pick Jayden Daniels). But ask any fan of the team why it feels like the dawn of a new day in Washington, and they likely would point to the vision of the franchise's new owners. Josh Harris bought the Commanders for a record $6.05 billion in July 2023 and has methodically set about erasing the stain and stench of the Daniel Snyder era, the last vestiges of which were vaporized at the end of last season's 4-13 debacle.

Despite ample cap space, the Commanders took a measured approach in free agency, staying away from the sort of splashy signings and long-term deals that had hamstrung them in the past; this time, 13 of its 20 acquisitions signed one-year deals, and no deal was longer than three years. As for the draft, the ultimate evaluation of Peters' first incoming class for the Commanders will largely hinge on the performance of Daniels, an immensely talented playmaker coming off a Heisman Trophy-winning season at LSU. But Peters also found game-changing talent with subsequent picks, amassing a draft class that drew widespread praise across the industry.

OFFENSE

New offensive coordinator Kliff Kingsbury has a track record for engineering high-octane attacks — preferring to spread the field, line up in shotgun, use tempo and take plenty of deep shots. In newcomer Daniels, who is better described as a passer with the ability to run than the other way around, he has the quarterback to do all of those things and more.

If there is one prevailing question about Daniels, it's whether his gaudy stats at LSU were padded by the elite level of talent around him, including two wide receivers who were drafted in the first round. He won't enjoy the same talent gap in Washington, although No. 1 receiver Terry McLaurin is both prolific (four straight seasons of at least 77 catches and 1,000 yards) and durable (17 starts in three straight seasons). Third-year wideout Jahan Dotson will line up opposite McLaurin, while third-round draft pick Luke McCaffrey, a possible starter at slot receiver, comes with an impeccable pedigree (son of former Pro Bowl receiver Ed McCaffrey and brother of 49ers running back Christian McCaffrey), as well as an impressive level of athleticism.

The Commanders amassed only 359 rushing attempts in 2023, by far the fewest in the league, largely because they fell behind in games early and often. They would prefer not to repeat that trend in 2024. Brian Robinson Jr. returns as Washington's top running back, although free-agent signee Austin Ekeler, an All-Pro as recently as 2022, could eat into Robinson's carries as well as take over third-down back duties from the departed Antonio Gibson. Ekeler is the first NFL player in history with at least 30 rushing touchdowns and 30 receiving touchdowns in the first seven years of his career.

Tight end was a spot where the Commanders needed a major upgrade, and they used both free-agent money and draft capital to make it happen. Veteran Zach Ertz, who signed a one-year deal, reunites with Kingsbury, under whom he played in Arizona in 2021 and '22. But Ertz may have been relegated to backup status after Washington spent a second-round pick on Ben Sinnott, a tough and versatile tight end who lined up all over the formation at Kansas State.

After watching quarterback Sam Howell get sacked a league-high 65 times in 2023, the Commanders focused on rebuilding the offensive line, which they

largely accomplished by signing Nick Allegretti and Tyler Biadasz to three-year free agent deals to be their left guard and center, respectively. They might also have a new left tackle, as they spent a third-round pick on TCU's Brandon Coleman; he'll compete for the starting job with veterans Cornelius Lucas and Trent Scott.

DEFENSE

After poaching the Cowboys' defensive brain trust — Quinn, the former Dallas defensive coordinator, brought along Dallas secondary coach and passing game coordinator Joe Whitt Jr. to serve as his defensive coordinator — the Commanders will try to replicate the same aggressive, blitz-happy, turnover-generating chaos in Washington.

The rebuild of the Commanders' 2024 defense actually began in the fall of 2023, when edge rushers Montez Sweat and Chase Young, both former Pro Bowlers, were traded, and it accelerated over the offseason. Among their first moves was to reunite with former Dallas edge rushers Dorance Armstrong and Dante Fowler Jr., whom they brought aboard via free agency. More big signings followed: edge rusher and former top-five overall pick Clelin Ferrell, veteran linebackers Bobby Wagner and Frankie Luvu and safety Jeremy Chinn. All will be significant contributors, if not starters, in 2024 — undoubtedly a comfort for Whitt, who has never served as a coordinator in the NFL.

Also a comfort for Whitt: the elite depth the Commanders possess up front, beginning with veteran defensive tackles Jonathan Allen and Daron Payne, former Alabama teammates who each have Pro Bowl selections on their resumes. As such, the Commanders' choice of tackle Jer'Zhan ("Johnny") Newton out of Illinois as their second-round draft pick looked like an unnecessary luxury, but the team expected him to go in the first round and couldn't resist when he fell to them at No. 36 overall. Newton will slot in behind Allen and Payne but could also line up alongside them occasionally. He suffered a fractured foot late last season at Illinois, which limited his participation at the NFL Scouting Combine, but the injury is said to be fully healed.

Weakside linebacker Jamin Davis, a first-round pick in 2021, is coming off his most productive season as a pro, but the team signaled its intentions by declining his fifth-year player option for 2025, then drafting his potential replacement in fifth-rounder Jordan Magee. Davis, Wagner and Luvu are likely to head up the linebackers unit.

The Commanders also found an intriguing new member of their secondary via the draft, in former Michigan cornerback Mike Sainristil, who figures to start immediately at nickelback. None other than former Alabama head coach Nick Saban called him "pound for pound, maybe the best player in this draft."

SPECIALISTS

Quinn will start his new gig in Washington with a new kicker, opting to sever ties with veteran Joey Slye and bring in veteran Brandon McManus, whom the team signed to a one-year $3.6 million contract. Across a 10-year NFL career, most of it spent in Denver, McManus has converted field goals at an 81.4 percent rate.

Punter Tress Way, a two-time Pro Bowler, is the longest-tenured player on the Commanders' roster, having latched on in 2014. New special teams coach Larry Izzo has called him "one of the best in the business."

Since it appears Washington didn't find any return specialists via free agency or the draft, figure on wideout Jamison Crowder remaining the top punt returner, with reserve running back Chris Rodriguez Jr. replacing the departed Antonio Gibson as the primary kick returner.

FINAL ANALYSIS

After so much turmoil and losing in Washington in recent years, no one would be foolish enough to call this squad a contender from Day 1. Any glimmer of progress would be welcomed by a fan base jaded by years of losing, dysfunction and mismanagement under Snyder. But Commanders fans also recall fondly how 12 years ago, Robert Griffin III — another rookie quarterback and Heisman winner with a similar build and skill set as Daniels, and who also arrived as the No. 2 overall pick — lifted the moribund franchise to a 10-win season and an out-of-nowhere division title in his first season in Washington.

GARY A. VASQUEZ-USA TODAY SPORTS

WAS

2023 RESULTS (4-13)

Sept. 10	Arizona	W	20-16
Sept. 17	at Denver	W	35-33
Sept. 24	vs Buffalo	L	3-37
Oct. 1	at Philadelphia (ot)	L	31-34
Oct. 5	Chicago	L	20-40
Oct. 15	at Atlanta	W	24-16
Oct. 22	at N.Y. Giants	L	7-14
Oct. 29	Philadelphia	L	31-38
Nov. 5	at New England	W	20-17
Nov. 12	at Seattle	L	26-29
Nov. 19	N.Y. Giants	L	19-31
Nov. 23	at Dallas	L	10-45
Dec. 3	Miami	L	15-45
Dec. 17	at L.A. Rams	L	20-28
Dec. 24	at N.Y. Jets	L	28-30
Dec. 31	San Francisco	L	10-27
Jan. 7	Dallas	L	10-38

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	312.8	24	14
Rushing	93.6	27	13
Passing	219.1	18	11
Scoring	19.4	25	13
Third Down %	35.6	25	14
Points/Play	0.310	24	12

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	388.9	32	16
Rushing	126.8	27	12
Passing	262.2	32	16
Scoring	30.5	32	16
Interceptions	8	T27	T13
Sacks	39	26	11
Opp. Pts./Play	0.464	32	16
TO Differential	-14	32	16

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Sam Howell	612	388	3,946	21	21
Jacoby Brissett	23	18	224	3	0

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Brian Robinson Jr.	178	733	4.1	5
Antonio Gibson	65	265	4.1	1
Sam Howell	48	263	5.5	5
Chris Rodriguez Jr.	51	247	4.8	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Terry McLaurin	79	1,002	12.7	4
Curtis Samuel	62	613	9.9	4
Logan Thomas	55	496	9.0	4
Jahan Dotson	49	518	10.6	4
Antonio Gibson	48	389	8.1	2
Brian Robinson Jr.	36	368	10.2	4

KICKING: Joey Slye, 19-24 FGs, 32-35 PATs, 89 points
TACKLES: Cody Barton, 121; Kamren Curl, 115
SACKS: Montez Sweat, 6.5; Jonathan Allen, 5.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Kendall Fuller, 2; Quan Martin, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

POORLY POSITIONED The Commanders' awful turnover ratio in 2023 also helped produce one of the worst field-position disparities in the NFL. While the Commanders' average starting field position ranked 25th in the league last season, their opponents' starting field position ranked fourth.

BUSINESS DECISION New Commanders linebacker **Bobby Wagner** had six million reasons for signing with the Commanders — that's the number of guaranteed dollars in his one-year deal — but there was an additional one: Wagner is working on his master's of business administration (MBA) degree at Howard University, which is located in the District of Columbia. Wagner, 34, enrolled in the 18-month program in January and had planned on completing the coursework online, but after signing with Washington, he said he might do some classes in person.

PUTRID PICKING It's no wonder the Commanders have gone seven straight seasons without a winning record. Just look at their putrid draft history: Only one player drafted by franchise since 2000 has made first-team All-Pro while playing in Washington (Brandon Scherff in 2020), while more recently, the four drafts between 2020-23 so far have produced just one Pro Bowl season (Chase Young in 2020).

MAGIC DENIED ESPN reported in April that Magic Johnson, one of the minority investors in Josh Harris's ownership group, pushed hard for the Commanders to hire six-time Super Bowl-winner Bill Belichick as head coach but was overruled by Harris, who reportedly didn't want a "strong" head coach with oversight over personnel matters. Harris, whose ownership interests include the NBA's Philadelphia 76ers, the NHL's New Jersey Devils and the Premier League's Crystal Palace FC, has a track record of preferring his head coaches to work under a strong GM with personnel oversight.

SCOUTING THE COMMANDERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP WASHINGTON "It's a new day in DC during an election year and with the local NFL franchise. Josh Harris is injecting a lot of money and enthusiasm into the organization. From what I've heard, and it's no shock, the exit of Daniel Snyder has given everyone a real shot in the arm in terms of morale around the building. … Jayden Daniels is on the thin side, but it's hard to teach that classic over-the-top throwing delivery or his kind of speed and ability to work off-script. There will be some growing pains, but that's to be expected. … Not a ton of confidence in Marcus Mariota if he has to play. The last time he was a starter in Atlanta, it was pretty rough out there. … Austin Ekeler gives the offense a proven pass-catcher out of the backfield. … No one is more competitive than Terry McLaurin. …I think Luke McCaffrey, Christian's brother, should fit in well. He's tall and has good hands and above-average speed. … Not a great offensive line. The hope is that Brandon Coleman stabilizes the left tackle spot. … Best part of the roster hasn't changed: defensive line. … Hard to block Jonathan Allen and Daron Payne, Dorance Armstrong and Dante Fowler Jr. … Frankie Luvu is a real head-knocker as a run-stopper, and he's a good blitzer. … Emmanuel Forbes is skinny, but he's wiry and has a nose for the football. … Having Jeremy Chinn makes any defense better. He's got great size and versatility and makes a ton of smart plays."

KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 COMMANDERS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16 Driskel, Jeff	QB	6-4	235	8	Louisiana Tech	FA-Cle-24	D6-SF-16
0 Mariota, Marcus	QB	6-4	223	9	Oregon	FA-Phi-24	D1-Ten-15

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
30 Ekeler, Austin	RB	5-10	200	7	Western State	FA-LAC-24	FA-LAC-17
31 McNichols, Jeremy	RB	5-9	205	3	Boise State	FA-24	D5-TB-17
8 Robinson Jr., Brian	RB	6-1	225	2	Alabama	D3-22	D3-Was-22
23 Rodriguez Jr., Chris	RB	5-11	224	1	Kentucky	D6-23	D6-Was-23

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10 Allen, Kazmeir	WR	5-9	175	1	UCLA	FA-23	FA-Was-23
87 Bates, John	TE	6-6	256	3	Boise State	D4-21	D4-Was-21
2 Brown, Dyami	WR	6-0	185	3	North Carolina	D3b-21	D3b-Was-21
83 Crowder, Jamison	WR	5-8	185	9	Duke	FA-23	D4-Was-15
84 Davis, Davion	WR	5-11	195	5	Sam Houston	FA-23	FA-Min-19
1 Dotson, Jahan	WR	5-11	184	2	Penn State	D1-22	D1-Was-22
86 Ertz, Zach	TE	6-5	250	11	Stanford	FA-24	D2-Phi-13
80 Hodges, Curtis	TE	6-8	240	2	Arizona State	FA-22	FA-Was-22
17 McLaurin, Terry	WR	6-0	210	5	Ohio State	D3-19	D3-Was-19
15 Milne, Dax	WR	6-1	190	3	BYU	D7c-21	D7c-Was-21
88 Rogers, Armani	TE	6-5	225	2	Ohio	FA-22	FA-Was-22
18 Tinsley, Mitchell	WR	6-1	205	1	Penn State	FA-23	FA-Was-23
89 Tremayne, Brycen	WR	6-4	212	1	Stanford	FA-23	FA-Was-23
85 Turner, Cole	TE	6-6	240	2	Nevada	D5b-22	D5b-Was-22
14 Zaccheaus, Olamide	WR	5-8	194	5	Virginia	FA-Phi-24	FA-Atl-19

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
62 Akingbulu, Alex	T	6-5	300	1	Fresno State	FA-22	FA-Was-22
67 Allegretti, Nick	G	6-4	310	5	Illinois	FA-KC-24	D7-KC-19
63 Biadasz, Tyler	C	6-4	316	4	Wisconsin	FA-Dal-24	D4b-Dal-20
64 Brooks, Mason	OL	6-6	315	1	Ole Miss	FA-23	FA-Was-23
76 Cosmi, Sam	T/G	6-7	309	3	Texas	D2-21	D2-Was-21
79 Daniels, Braeden	T	6-4	297	1	Utah	D4-23	D4-Was-23
60 Deiter, Michael	C/G	6-6	315	5	Wisconsin	FA-Hou-24	D3-Mia-19
61 Good-Jones, Julian	G	6-5	313	2	Iowa State	PS-Phi-23	FA-Phi-20
78 Lucas, Cornelius	T	6-8	327	10	Kansas State	FA-Chi-20	FA-Det-14
75 Paul, Chris	G	6-4	324	2	Tulsa	D7a-22	D7a-Was-22
73 Scott, Trent	T	6-5	320	6	Grambling State	FA-Pit-23	FA-LAC-18
53 Stromberg, Ricky	C/G	6-4	313	1	Arkansas	D3-23	D3-Was-23
71 Wylie, Andrew	G/T	6-5	304	6	Eastern Michigan	FA-KC-23	FA-Ind-17

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
93 Allen, Jonathan	DT	6-3	300	7	Alabama	D1-17	D1-Was-17
92 Armstrong, Dorance	DE	6-3	270	6	Kansas	FA-Dal-24	D4a-Dal-18
99 Ferrell, Clelin	DL	6-4	265	5	Clemson	FA-SF-24	D1a-LV-19
6 Fowler, Dante	DE	6-3	250	8	Florida	FA-Dal-24	D1-Jac-15
56 Harris, Jalen	DE	6-4	257	1	Arizona	PS-Chi-23	FA-Chi-23
55 Henry, KJ	DE	6-4	255	1	Clemson	D5-23	D5-Was-23
50 Jones Jr., Andre	DE	6-5	258	1	Louisiana	D7-23	D7-Was-23
98 Mathis, Phidarian	DT	6-4	312	2	Alabama	D2-22	D2-Was-22
Ndubuisi, Haggai Chi.	DL	6-6	298	1	None	FA-24	FA-Ari-22
97 Obada, Efe	DE	6-6	265	6	None	FA-Buf-22	FA-Dal-15
94 Payne, Daron	DT	6-3	320	6	Alabama	D1-18	D1-Was-18
79 Potoa'e, Benning	DT	6-3	290	4	Washington	FA-22	FA-TB-20
59 Pryor, Joshua	DE	6-4	280	1	Bowie State	FA-23	FA-Was-23
91 Ridgeway III, John	DT	6-5	321	2	Arkansas	W-Dal-22	D5-Dal-22

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
46 Bouyer-Randle, Bra.	LB	6-2	241	1	Connecticut	FA-23	FA-TB-23
52 Davis, Jamin	LB	6-4	234	3	Kentucky	D1-21	D1-Was-21
47 Jones, Keandre	LB	6-3	220	2	Maryland	FA-24	FA-Chi-20
4 Luvu, Frankie	LB	6-3	235	6	Washington State	FA-Car-24	FA-NYJ-18
57 Pittman, Anthony	LB	6-3	242	3	Wayne State	FA-Det-24	FA-Det-19
54 Wagner, Bobby	LB	6-0	242	12	Utah State	FA-Sea-24	D2-Sea-12
32 Walker, Mykal	LB	6-3	232	4	Fresno State	FA-Pit-24	D4-Atl-20

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
35 Butler, Percy	S	6-0	190	2	Louisiana	D4-22	D4-Was-22
26 Castro-Fields, Tariq	CB	6-1	197	2	Penn State	W-SF-22	D6-SF-22
11 Chinn, Jeremy	S	6-3	220	4	Southern Illinois	FA-Car-24	D2b-Car-20
24 Davis, Michael	CB	6-2	196	7	BYU	FA-LAC-24	FA-LAC-17
13 Forbes Jr., Emmanuel	CB	6-0	173	1	Mississippi State	D1-23	D1-Was-23
22 Forrest, Darrick	S	6-0	200	3	Cincinnati	D5-21	D5-Was-21
34 Holmes, Christian	CB	6-1	205	2	Oklahoma State	D7b-22	D7b-Was-22
19 Igbinoghene, Noah	CB	5-11	194	4	Auburn	FA-Dal-24	D1c-Mia-20
36 Kelly, Kyu Blu	CB	6-0	191	1	Stanford	W-GB-23	D5-Bal-23
16 Mandell, D'Angelo	CB	6-1	192	1	BYU	FA-23	FA-Dal-23
20 Martin, Quan	DB	6-0	195	1	Illinois	D2-23	D2-Was-23
29 Pierre, James	CB	6-2	185	4	Florida Atlantic	FA-Pit-24	FA-Pit-20
39 Reaves, Jeremy	S	5-11	200	6	South Alabama	FA-18	FA-Phi-18
25 St-Juste, Benjamin	CB	6-3	200	3	Minnesota	D3a-21	D3a-Was-21
37 Whiteside II, Nick	CB	6-1	200	1	Saginaw Valley St.	FA-23	FA-Was-23

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3 McManus, Brandon	K	6-3	201	10	Temple	FA-Jac-24	FA-Ind-13
69 Ott, Tyler	LS	6-3	253	9	Harvard	FA-Bal-24	FA-NE-14
5 Way, Tress	P	6-1	220	10	Oklahoma	W-Chi-14	FA-Chi-13

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	17	Terry McLaurin	15	Dax Milne
WR		Luke McCaffrey (R)	80	Jamison Crowder
WR	1	Jahan Dotson	2	Dyami Brown
LT		Brandon Coleman (R)	78	Cornelius Lucas
LG	67	Nick Allegretti	53	Ricky Stromberg
C	63	Tyler Biadasz	60	Michael Deiter
RG	76	Sam Cosmi	75	Chris Paul
RT	71	Andrew Wylie	73	Trent Scott
TE		Ben Sinnott (R)	86	Zach Ertz
QB		Jayden Daniels (R)	0	Marcus Mariota
RB	30	Austin Ekeler	8	Brian Robinson Jr.

DEFENSE

DE	92	Dorance Armstrong	6	Dante Fowler Jr.
DT	94	Daron Payne	98	Phidarian Mathis
DT	93	Jonathan Allen		Jer'Zhan Newton (R)
DE	99	Clelin Ferrell	55	KJ Henry
WLB	52	Jamin Davis		Jordan Magee (R)
MLB	54	Bobby Wagner	57	Anthony Pittman
SLB	4	Frankie Luvu	32	Mykal Walker
CB	25	Benjamin St-Juste	29	James Pierre
CB	24	Michael Davis		Mike Sainristil (R)
SS	22	Darrick Forrest	11	Jeremy Chinn
FS	35	Percy Butler		Dominique Hampton (R)

SPECIALISTS

P	5	Tress Way	PR 80	Jamison Crowder
K	3	Brandon McManus	KR 23	Chris Rodriguez Jr.

46.8

Washington's defense gave up a score on a league-worst 46.8 percent of opponents' drives.

COMMANDERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Jayden Daniels	QB	6-4	210	LSU
2.	Jer'Zhan Newton	DT	6-2	295	Illinois
2.	Mike Sainristil	CB	5-10	182	Michigan
2.	Ben Sinnott	TE	6-4	247	Kansas State
3.	Brandon Coleman	OL	6-6	320	TCU
3.	Luke McCaffrey	WR	6-2	198	Rice
5.	Jordan Magee	LB	6-3	226	Temple
5.	Dominique Hampton	FS	6-3	220	Washington
8.	Javonte Jean-Baptiste	DE	6-5	260	Notre Dame

In his first draft as Washington's general manager, Adam Peters prioritized talent over need, spreading his nine picks across nearly every positional group. While Jayden Daniels was the obvious pick at No. 2 overall, potentially giving the Commanders the franchise QB they have lacked since Robert Griffin III's knee injury, it was somewhat surprising they didn't do more to beef up his protection. Peters' best-player-available approach was epitomized with defensive lineman Jer'Zhan Newton, No. 36 overall, who appears to be blocked from the starting lineup but whose first-round talent made him too good to pass up. On the other hand, Mike Sainristil could start at nickel back, Ben Sinnott at tight end and Luke McCaffrey as slot receiver, and all the team's later picks could contribute on special teams.

CHI BEARS

NFC NORTH FORECAST **3**

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	Tennessee	1:00
Sept. 15	at Houston	8:20
Sept. 22	at Indianapolis	1:00
Sept. 29	L.A. Rams	1:00
Oct. 6	Carolina	1:00
Oct. 13	vs. Jacksonville*	9:30 a.m.
Oct. 20	BYE	
Oct. 27	at Washington	1:00
Nov. 3	at Arizona	4:05
Nov. 10	New England	1:00
Nov. 17	Green Bay	1:00
Nov. 24	Minnesota	1:00
Nov. 28	at Detroit	12:30
Dec. 8	at San Francisco	4:25
Dec. 16	at Minnesota	8:00
Dec. 22	Detroit	1:00
Dec. 26	Seattle	8:15
Jan. 4/5	at Green Bay	TBD

*Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, London

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Matt Eberflus
Record With Team: 10-24
Career Record: 10-24
Offensive Coordinator: Shane Waldron
Defensive Coordinator: Eric Washington
Special Teams Coordinator: Richard Hightower
Quarterbacks: Kerry Joseph
Running Backs: Chad Morton
Wide Receivers: Chris Beatty
Offensive Pass Game Coordinator: Thomas Brown
Tight Ends: Jim Dray
Offensive Run Game Coordinator/ Offensive Line: Chris Morgan
Defensive Line: Travis Smith
Linebackers: Dave Borgonzi
Cornerbacks/Passing Game Coordinator: Jon Hoke
Secondary/Safeties: Andre Curtis
Nickelbacks: David Overstreet II

After more than doubling their win total in improving from 3-14 in 2022 to 7-10 last season, the Bears appear primed to take another big step in 2024.

Their defense blossomed into one of the stingiest and most opportunistic in the NFL in 2023, ranking No. 1 against the run after finishing 31st the previous year and increasing its interception total from 14 to 22, tied for the most in the league with the NFC champion 49ers. The unit's resurgence was keyed by the midseason acquisition of defensive end Montez Sweat in a trade with the Commanders and the emergence of a playmaking young secondary led by cornerback Jaylon Johnson. Sweat and Johnson both were selected to the first Pro Bowls of their career.

The Bears offense, long mired in mediocrity, has the potential — at least on paper — to be more explosive than any in franchise history since the 1940s, when the Monsters of the Midway won four NFL championships. Rookie quarterback Caleb Williams, selected with the No. 1 overall pick in the draft, will be surrounded by talent, including one of the league's most formidable receiving trios in veterans DJ Moore and Keenan Allen and rookie first-round choice Rome Odunze.

OFFENSE

For the first two months of the offseason, the main topic of conversation on Chicago sports radio and in local sports bars was whether the Bears should keep quarterback Justin Fields and build around him or pick Williams at No. 1. It was a debate that divided the city like allegiances between the Cubs and White Sox.

Bears general manager Ryan Poles ultimately traded Fields to the Steelers and picked Williams, the consensus top prospect in a draft loaded with talented quarterbacks. The Washington, D.C., native produced an eye-popping 120 touchdowns (93 passing and 27 rushing) in three seasons at Oklahoma (2021) and USC (2022-23) and won the Heisman Trophy in 2022.

It's difficult to imagine a better situation for a rookie quarterback to step into than the one in Chicago. Williams' options at receiver will include Moore, who led the Bears in all receiving categories last year with 96 catches, 1,364 yards and eight touchdowns; Allen, a six-time Pro Bowler who was acquired in an offseason trade with the Chargers; and Odunze, who was named AP first-team All-American in 2023 at Washington after leading the nation and setting a school record with 1,640 yards while catching 92 passes and scoring 13 TDs. The Bears also inked running back D'Andre Swift to a three-year, $24 million deal, and they also signed tight end Gerald Everett as a backup to incumbent Cole Kmet.

Key returning players include running backs Khalil Herbert and Roschon Johnson, left tackle Braxton Jones, left guard Teven Jenkins, right guard Nate Davis and right tackle Darnell Wright. The Bears filled their need at center by trading for Ryan Bates and signing Coleman Shelton in free agency.

The offense will be led by new coordinator Shane Waldron, who replaces Luke Getsy. Waldron boasts 10 years of NFL coaching experience, including the last three as Seahawks offensive coordinator. In Seattle, he helped veteran quarterback Geno Smith resurrect his career. Smith was named NFL Comeback Player of the Year in 2022 after becoming the league's first quarterback since Rich Gannon in 1999 to earn his first Pro Bowl selection in the 10th year of his career or later.

DEFENSE

The Bears will once again rely heavily on Sweat to generate pressure on the quarterback. Last year, he became the first player in NFL history to lead two different teams in sacks in the same season, recording 6.5 for the Commanders and 6.0 for the Bears.

Sweat's arrival last Oct. 31 helped turn the Chicago defense around. The unit produced 18 takeaways in a six-game span after mustering nine in its first 10 contests. The run defense climbed from 18th in the rankings entering Week 5 all the way to the top of the league by the end of the season.

The Bears did not have another player record more than 4.5 sacks, and they don't have a player returning this year who had more than 3.5 in 2023. They will need someone to step up in that area after not addressing the edge rusher position with a key free agent or high draft pick.

JAMIE SABAU-USA TODAY SPORTS

The Bears defense under head coach Matt Eberflus is predicated on producing pressure from its front four and not relying on blitzes.

The linebacker position is solid, powered by 2023 free-agent signees T.J. Edwards and Tremaine Edmunds. Both made a major impact in their first seasons with the Bears, excelling against the run as well as in pass coverage. Edwards led the defense and ranked seventh in the NFL with 155 tackles and established career highs with 2.5 sacks, three interceptions and two fumble recoveries. Edmunds compiled 113 tackles and tied for the team lead with a career-high four interceptions, one of which he returned for a touchdown.

The strength of the defense is its secondary, which features cornerbacks Johnson and Tyrique Stevenson, nickelback Kyler Gordon, and safeties Jaquan Brisker and free-agent veteran signee Kevin Byard III, who replaces Eddie Jackson. Johnson inked a four-year, $76 million contract extension in March after being voted second-team All-Pro in 2023 thanks to a career-high four interceptions — one of which he returned for a TD — and 10 pass breakups.

Though Eberflus will continue to call defensive plays, he'll benefit from the addition of new coordinator Eric Washington, who returns for a second stint in Chicago. Washington boasts 16 years of NFL coaching experience, beginning with the Bears as a defensive assistant (2008-09) and defensive line coach (2010). He spent the past four seasons with the Bills as defensive line coach, also serving as a senior defensive assistant (2022) and assistant head coach (2023).

SPECIALISTS

The most accurate kicker in Bears history returns for a fifth straight season. Cairo Santos has made 90.4 percent of his field-goal attempts (113-of-125) for Chicago. Last year, he connected on 92.1 percent (35-of-38), including a career high 7-of-8 from 50 yards and beyond.

The Bears turned some heads when they spent a fourth-round pick on punter Tory Taylor. The 26-year-old Australian won the Ray Guy Award as the nation's best punter and was named first-team All-American last season at Iowa after averaging 48.2 yards on 93 punts, placing 32 inside the 20 with seven touchbacks.

The Bears must replace punt returner Trent Taylor, who signed with the 49ers. One candidate is Dante Pettis, who handled those duties in 2022 and re-signed with the Bears in March after missing last season with an injury. The team's primary kickoff returners in 2023, Velus Jones Jr. and Tyler Scott, return this year but could be challenged by Herbert, who was the Bears' primary kickoff returner in 2021.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Seemingly in their final stages of a comprehensive rebuild, the Bears should contend for a playoff berth in 2024. There's an abundance of optimism in Chicago that a team that has not won a playoff game since the 2010 season and has had just one winning season since 2012 finally has its arrow pointing up.

Poles has been lauded for his reconstruction of the roster, especially a 2023 blockbuster trade in which he dealt the No. 1 pick to the Panthers in exchange for Moore and a bevy of draft picks. While Carolina chose quarterback Bryce Young at No. 1, the Bears have used the deal to select Wright, Stevenson, Williams and Taylor and still have a 2025 second-round pick in their pocket.

CHI

2023 RESULTS (7-10)

Sept. 10	Green Bay	L	20-38
Sept. 17	at Tampa Bay	L	17-27
Sept. 24	at Kansas City	L	10-41
Oct. 1	Denver	L	28-31
Oct. 5	at Washington	W	40-20
Oct. 15	Minnesota	L	13-19
Oct. 22	Las Vegas	W	30-12
Oct. 29	at L.A. Chargers	L	13-30
Nov. 5	at New Orleans	L	17-24
Nov. 9	Carolina	W	16-13
Nov. 19	at Detroit	L	26-31
Nov. 27	at Minnesota	W	12-10
Dec. 10	Detroit	W	28-13
Dec. 17	at Cleveland	L	17-20
Dec. 24	Arizona	W	27-16
Dec. 31	Atlanta	W	37-17
Jan. 7	at Green Bay	L	9-17

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	323.2	20	11
Rushing	141.1	2	1
Passing	182.1	27	14
Scoring	21.2	18	10
Third Down %	41.2	12	8
Points/Play	0.328	20	10

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	324.2	12	5
Rushing	86.4	1	1
Passing	237.8	25	12
Scoring	22.3	20	9
Interceptions	22	T1	T1
Sacks	30	31	15
Opp. Pts./Play	0.366	23	10
TO Differential	+3	11	6

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Justin Fields	370	227	2,562	16	9
Tyson Bagent	143	94	859	3	6

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Justin Fields	124	657	5.3	4
Khalil Herbert	132	611	4.6	2
D'Onta Foreman	109	425	3.9	4
Roschon Johnson	81	352	4.3	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
DJ Moore	96	1,364	14.2	8
Cole Kmet	73	719	9.8	6
Roschon Johnson	34	209	6.1	0
Darnell Mooney	31	414	13.4	1

KICKING: Cairo Santos, 35-38 FGs, 31-33 PATs, 136 points
TACKLES: T.J. Edwards, 153; Tremaine Edmunds, 113
SACKS: Montez Sweat, 6.0; Justin Jones, 4.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Tremaine Edmunds, 4; Jaylon Johnson, 4; Tyrique Stevenson, 4

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

SEEING THE FUTURE Bears third-round pick **Kiran Amegadjie**, a tackle from Yale, ran into Matt Eberflus while playing golf at Kemper Lakes Golf Club in suburban Chicago last year. "I met coach Eberflus at a golf club that my dad belonged to, and I introduced myself," Amegadjie said. "He didn't know who I was, and I told him one day I would be sitting in his office and the next year they would be looking to draft me." Amegadjie proved to be clairvoyant. He sat in Eberflus' office during a top-30 visit to Halas Hall and was later selected by the Bears with the 75th pick in the draft. "He said, 'Hey, you're going to end up drafting me next year,'" Eberflus recalled of their initial meeting. "I said, 'OK, we'll take a look at you,' because I hadn't seen him on film yet. So it came true. How crazy is that?"

DIALING LONG DISTANCE Cairo Santos figures to provide more long-range field goals in 2024. Just like he did last year, he spent part of the offseason working out at Episcopal High School in Jacksonville, Florida, where the football field is adjacent to crowded tennis courts. To prevent hitting tennis players with footballs, Santos only attempts kicks of 50 yards and beyond. Practice hasn't made perfect, but Santos has made 84.6 percent of field goals of 50-yards-plus (11-of-13) in the last two seasons after converting 45.4 percent (10-of-22) over his first eight NFL seasons.

GOOD LUCK CHARM Since becoming Bears coach in 2022, Eberflus has attended three Cubs games at Wrigley Field and has seen the North Siders win all three and outscore their opponents 42-3. Eberflus witnessed a 21-0 rout of the Pirates in 2022 that was the Cubs' most lopsided shutout victory since at least 1901. He also saw a 13-0 win over the Dodgers and an 8-3 victory over the Marlins in 2023.

SCOUTING THE BEARS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP CHICAGO "Caleb Williams' arrival signals the start of a fun ride in Chicago. His improvisational skills are off the charts. He's got a strong arm and playmaking skills you can't teach. … They should have waited longer to trade Justin Fields. Didn't get much in return from the Steelers, and I thought Ryan Poles was impatient. … Williams is surrounded by some solid playmakers with the trade for Keenan Allen headlining the moves along with D'Andre Swift. … Rome Odunze's speed is a huge factor along with DJ Moore's ability to gain separation. … Doesn't feel like the offensive line is good enough yet. Williams is going to have to create a lot off-script when things inevitably break down in the pocket. … I like the trade for Montez Sweat on a defensive line that doesn't have enough impact players besides him. … Classic overpays for off-the-ball linebackers Tremaine Edmunds and T.J. Edwards. … Jaylon Johnson is a big bet they're making. So much money for a corner who hasn't really proven to be elite yet. … This defense feels like a group that isn't quite there yet. … The mixture of Kevin Byard III and Jaquan Brisker at safety gives Chicago a winning combination."

GREGORY FISHER-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 BEARS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Bagent, Tyson	QB	6-3	213	1	Shepherd	FA-23	FA-Chi-23
11 Rypien, Brett	QB	6-2	202	4	Boise State	FA-NYJ-24	FA-Den-19

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
35 Blasingame, Khari	FB	6-0	233	5	Vanderbilt	FA-Ten-22	FA-Min-19
24 Herbert, Khalil	RB	5-9	212	3	Virginia Tech	D6a-21	D6a-Chi-21
20 Homer, Travis	RB	5-10	202	5	Miami	FA-Sea-23	D6a-Sea-19
23 Johnson, Roschon	RB	6-2	222	1	Texas	D4a-23	D4a-Chi-23
4 Swift, D'Andre	RB	5-9	208	4	Georgia	FA-Phi-24	D2-Det-20

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
13 Allen, Keenan	WR	6-2	211	11	California	T-LAC-24	D3-LAC-13
88 Carlson, Stephen	TE	6-4	240	2	Princeton	FA-23	FA-Cle-19
14 Everett, Gerald	TE	6-3	240	7	South Alabama	FA-LAC-24	D2-LAR-17
80 Johnson, Collin	WR	6-6	220	3	Texas	FA-23	D5-Jac-20
12 Jones Jr., Velus	WR	6-0	200	2	Tennessee	D3-22	D3-Chi-22
85 Kmet, Cole	TE	6-6	260	4	Notre Dame	D2a-20	D2a-Chi-20
2 Moore, DJ	WR	6-0	210	6	Maryland	T-Car-23	D1-Car-18
81 Pettis Dante	WR	6-1	195	5	Washington	FA-NYG-22	D2-SF-18
10 Scott, Tyler	WR	5-11	185	1	Cincinnati	D4b-23	D4b-Chi-23
Swain, Freddie	WR	6-0	202	4	Florida	FA-24	D6-Sea-20
Sweeney, Tommy	TE	6-5	251	3	Boston College	FA-24	D7-Buf-19
83 Webster, Nsimba	WR	5-10	180	5	Eastern Wash.	FA-22	FA-LAR-19

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
71 Bates, Ryan	OL	6-4	302	5	Penn State	T-Buf-24	FA-Phi-19
75 Borom, Larry	OL	6-5	333	3	Missouri	D5-21	D5-Chi-21
63 Carvin, Jerome	OL	6-5	307	1	Tennessee	FA-24	FA-KC-24
69 Carter, Ja'Tyre	OL	6-3	311	2	Southern	D7a-22	D7a-Chi-22
74 Collins, Aviante	OL	6-4	292	4	TCU	FA-23	FA-Min-17
73 Curhan, Jake	OL	6-6	316	3	California	FA-Sea-24	FA-Sea-21
64 Davis, Nate	OL	6-3	316	5	Charlotte	D3-19	D3-Chi-19
76 Jenkins, Teven	OL	6-6	321	3	Oklahoma State	D2-21	D2-Chi-21
70 Jones, Braxton	OL	6-5	310	2	Southern Utah	D5a-22	D5a-Chi-22
68 Kramer Jr., Doug	OL	6-2	300	2	Illinois	D6c-22	D6c-Chi-22
60 Murray, Bill	OL	6-4	307	4	William & Mary	FA-23	FA-NE-20
79 Pryor, Matt	OL	6-7	332	6	TCU	FA-SF-24	D6-Phi-18
65 Shelton, Coleman	OL	6-4	299	5	Washington	FA-LAR-24	FA-LAR-19
58 Wright, Darnell	OL	6-6	333	1	Tennessee	D1-23	D1-Chi-23

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
97 Billings, Andrew	DL	6-1	311	7	Baylor	FA-LV-23	D4-Cin-16
99 Dexter Sr., Gervon	DL	6-6	312	1	Florida	D2a-23	D2a-Chi-23
72 Dwumfour, Michael	DL	6-1	296	2	Michigan	FA-23	FA-NYJ-21
92 Hardy, Daniel	DL	6-3	240	2	Montana State	FA-23	D7-LAR-22
52 Kareem, Khalid	DL	6-4	268	4	Notre Dame	W-Ind-23	D5-Cin-20
55 Martin, Jake	DL	6-2	242	6	Temple	FA-Ind-24	D6-Sea-18
96 Pickens, Zacch	DL	6-4	304	1	South Carolina	D3-23	D3-Chi-23
90 Robinson, Dominique	DL	6-5	253	2	Miami (OH)	D5b-22	D5b-Chi-22
98 Sweat, Montez	DL	6-6	262	5	Mississippi State	T-Was-23	D1b-Was-19
95 Walker, DeMarcus	DL	6-4	280	6	Florida State	FA-Ten-23	D2-Den-17

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
47 Baskerville, Micah	LB	6-0	224	1	LSU	FA-23	FA-Chi-23
49 Edmunds, Tremaine	LB	6-5	250	6	Virginia Tech	FA-Buf-23	D1b-Buf-18
53 Edwards, T.J.	LB	6-1	242	5	Wisconsin	FA-Phi-23	FA-Phi-19
43 Gates, DeMarquis	LB	6-2	221	1	Ole Miss	FA-22	FA-Cle-18
45 Ogbongbemiga, Amen	LB	6-0	231	3	Oklahoma State	FA-LAC-24	FA-LAC-21
57 Sanborn, Jack	LB	6-2	234	2	Wisconsin	FA-22	FA-Chi-22
44 Sewell, Noah	LB	6-2	246	1	Oregon	D5a-23	D5a-Chi-23

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
39 Blackwell, Josh	DB	5-11	180	3	Duke	FA-23	FA-Phi-22
9 Brisker, Jaquan	DB	6-1	200	2	Penn State	D2b-22	D2b-Chi-22
31 Byard III, Kevin	S	5-11	212	8	Middle Tennessee	FA-Phi-24	D3-Ten-16
25 Colbert, Adrian	DB	6-2	205	6	Miami	FA-23	D7-SF-17
38 Coleman III, Douglas	DB	6-1	200	1	Texas Tech	FA-24	FA-Den-20
6 Gordon, Kyler	DB	6-0	200	2	Washington	D2a-22	D2a-Chi-22
22 Hicks, Elijah	DB	5-11	200	2	California	D7b-22	D7b-Chi-22
1 Johnson, Jaylon	CB	6-0	196	4	Utah	D2b-20	D2b-Chi-20
26 Johnson, Quindell	DB	6-1	205	1	Memphis	W-LAR-23	FA-LAR-23
21 Jones, Jaylon	DB	5-11	190	2	Ole Miss	FA-22	FA-Chi-22
30 Moore, Tarvarius	S	6-2	200	5	Southern Miss	FA-24	D3b-SF-18
36 Owens, Jonathan	S	5-11	210	5	Missouri Western	FA-GB-24	FA-Ari-18
32 Smith, Terell	DB	6-1	204	1	Minnesota	D5b-23	D5b-Chi-23
29 Stevenson, Tyrique	DB	6-0	214	1	Miami	D2b-23	D2b-Chi-23
27 Stroman Jr., Greg	DB	6-0	182	5	Virginia Tech	FA-22	D7a-Was-18

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
43 Lyons, Cameron	LS	6-0	225	1	Charlotte	FA-24	FA-NYG-23
8 Santos, Cairo	K	5-8	175	10	Tulane	FA-20	FA-KC-14
48 Scales, Patrick	LS	6-3	226	9	Utah State	FA-15	FA-Bal-11
37 Waitman, Corliss	P	6-2	210	2	South Alabama	FA-24	FA-Pit-20

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	2	DJ Moore	10	Tyler Scott
WR	13	Keenan Allen	12	Velus Jones Jr.
WR	15	Rome Odunze (R)	81	Dante Pettis
LT	70	Braxton Jones	72	Kiran Amegadjie (R)
LG	76	Teven Jenkins	79	Matt Pryor
C	71	Ryan Bates	65	Coleman Shelton
RG	64	Nate Davis	69	Ja'Tyre Carter
RT	58	Darnell Wright	75	Larry Borom
TE	85	Cole Kmet	14	Gerald Everett
QB	18	Caleb Williams (R)	17	Tyson Bagent
RB	4	D'Andre Swift	24	Khalil Herbert

DEFENSE

DE	98	Montez Sweat	94	Austin Booker (R)
DT	99	Gervon Dexter Sr.	78	Michael Dwumfour
DT	97	Andrew Billings	96	Zacch Pickens
DE	95	DeMarcus Walker	90	Dominique Robinson
WLB	53	T.J. Edwards	47	Micah Baskerville
MLB	49	Tremaine Edmunds	44	Noah Sewell
SLB	57	Jack Sanborn	45	Amen Ogbongbemiga
CB	1	Jaylon Johnson	32	Terell Smith
CB	29	Tyrique Stevenson	21	Jaylon Jones
NB	6	Kyler Gordon	39	Josh Blackwell
S	31	Kevin Byard III	22	Elijah Hicks
S	9	Jaquan Brisker	36	Jonathan Owens

SPECIALISTS

K	8	Cairo Santos	KR	12	Velus Jones Jr.
P	19	Tory Taylor (R)	PR	81	Dante Pettis

1,003

The number of yards the Bears allowed on receptions by running backs last year per Pro Football Reference, the most in the NFL by more than 200 yards. They also allowed seven touchdowns on those catches, second most in the league behind the Cardinals.

BEARS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Caleb Williams	QB	6-1	215	USC
1.	Rome Odunze	WR	6-3	215	Washington
3.	Kiran Amegadjie	OT	6-5	326	Yale
4.	Tory Taylor	P	6-4	223	Iowa
5.	Austin Booker	DE	6-6	245	Kansas

The Bears are hoping that their decades-long search for an elite franchise quarterback is over after spending the No. 1 pick in the draft on the position for the first time in team history. Landing Rome Odunze was also a huge win. Kiran Amegadjie's position versatility is a trait embraced by general manager Ryan Poles. Taking a punter in the fourth round raised eyebrows, but Tory Taylor's record-setting success kicking in less-than-ideal conditions at Iowa should provide a significant boost. A lack of production is the primary reason Austin Booker was still on the board in the fifth round, but the physically gifted edge rusher should have plenty of opportunity to prove Poles was prescient in trading back into the draft to grab him.

DET LIONS

NFC NORTH FORECAST

1

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	L.A. Rams	8:20
Sept. 15	Tampa Bay	1:00
Sept. 22	at Arizona	4:25
Sept. 30	Seattle	8:15
Oct. 6	BYE	
Oct. 13	at Dallas	4:25
Oct. 20	at Minnesota	1:00
Oct. 27	Tennessee	1:00
Nov. 3	at Green Bay	4:25
Nov. 10	at Houston	8:20
Nov. 17	Jacksonville	1:00
Nov. 24	at Indianapolis	1:00
Nov. 28	Chicago	12:30
Dec. 5	Green Bay	8:15
Dec. 15	Buffalo	4:25
Dec. 22	at Chicago	1:00
Dec. 30	at San Francisco	8:15
Jan. 4/5	Minnesota	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Dan Campbell
Record With Team: 24-26-1
Career Record: 29-33-1
Offensive Coordinator: Ben Johnson
Defensive Coordinator: Aaron Glenn
Special Teams Coordinator: Dave Fipp
Quarterbacks: Mark Brunell
Passing Game Coordinator: Tanner Engstrand
Assistant Head Coach/Running Backs: Scottie Montgomery
Wide Receivers: Antwaan Randle El
Tight Ends: Steve Heiden
Offensive Line: Hank Fraley
Run Game Coordinator/Defensive Line: Terrell Williams
Linebackers: Kelvin Sheppard
Outside Linebackers: Dave Corrao
Passing Game Coordinator/Defensive Backs: Deshea Townsend
Cornerbacks: Dre Bly

They had a ball, all right. But the Lions want everyone to know that the party is just getting started. After winning their first division title in 30 years and winning multiple playoff games in the same season for the first time in the Super Bowl era, Lions general manager Brad Holmes bristled at the idea Detroit's run to the NFC title game was some sort of fluke. "I don't want anybody to think that this was a one shot, Cinderella, magical journey that just happened," said Holmes, who earned NFL executive of the year honors in his third season with the Lions. "No, it's real. This is exactly what was supposed to happen." What happens next, though, depends on whether a Detroit team that returns the bulk of its lineup and all three coordinators can handle the expectations that come with the territory.

OFFENSE

For the second straight offseason, coordinator Ben Johnson turned down head-coaching opportunities to stay in Detroit, citing unfinished business. Under Johnson, the Lions again were one of the NFL's most efficient offenses in 2023, ranking in the top five in rushing and passing, while scoring 30 or more points 11 times, including two playoff games.

Johnson also has helped quarterback Jared Goff reach another level in the prime of his career. Goff threw for 4,575 yards and 30 touchdowns, posted a career-best completion percentage (67.3) and didn't miss a snap all season. And after winning over the fanbase with his play and his playoff moxie, including a full-circle win over Matthew Stafford and the Rams in the NFC wild-card round, the 29-year-old is due for a hefty contract extension this offseason.

Goff is as comfortable in Johnson's scheme as he is in the pocket, thanks to one of the NFL's best offensive lines. And it remains largely intact, with four of five starters returning and a pair of All-Pros in center Frank Ragnow and right tackle Penei Sewell, whose contract extension in April made him the league's highest-paid offensive lineman. The Lions signed veteran right guard Kevin Zeitler, a Pro Bowler in Baltimore last season, to replace Jonah Jackson. Taylor Decker remains a stalwart at left tackle, and left guard Graham Glasgow re-signed after arguably his best season as a pro.

That group paved the way for one of the league's best rushing tandems in David Montgomery and rookie Jahmyr Gibbs, the first teammates in NFL history to produce at least 1,000 scrimmage yards and 10 rushing touchdowns each in the same season. No team got more offensive production out of a pair of rookies than Detroit did with Gibbs, a dynamic dual threat out of the backfield, and Sam LaPorta, whose 86 receptions were an NFL record for a first-year tight end. LaPorta's fluid route-running and contested catches made him an instant favorite for Goff, but his run-blocking impressed as well. The Lions also matched the 49ers' offer sheet to keep his inline backup, Brock Wright, as a restricted free agent.

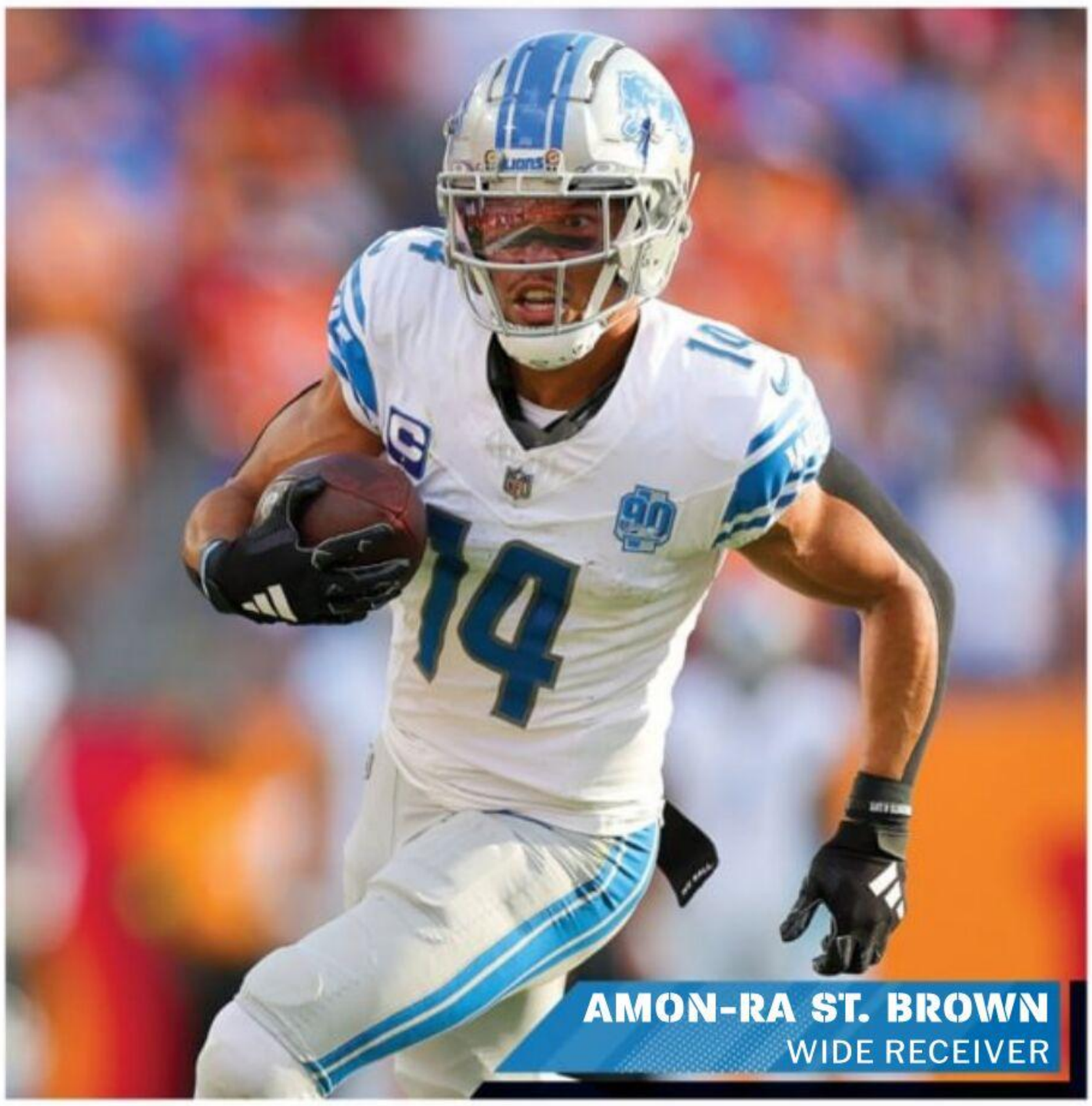
Detroit locked up another cornerstone piece by signing top receiver Amon-Ra St. Brown to a pricey extension. But the All-Pro wideout remains invaluable in this offense, a heart-and-soul leader who is good for 100-plus receptions and coming off a season where he led the NFL in yards after the catch. Goff did lose one of his trusted targets to free agency in Josh Reynolds, but the Lions are banking on a bigger contribution from former first-round pick Jameson Williams, who missed the start of 2023 due to a gambling suspension but came on late and had two TDs in the NFC title game. Kalif Raymond and Donovan

Peoples-Jones also return, but the Lions will look to bolster the wide receiver position this summer.

DEFENSE

Holmes openly admits the defense was a "complete start-over, basically," when they began this rebuild in 2021. It remains a work in progress, and coordinator Aaron Glenn's unit is probably the key to the Lions' Super Bowl hopes.

Detroit improved dramatically in defending the run, finishing second in the NFL and allowing a league-low five 100-yard games last season. They also added an elite run defender in free agency, signing tackle D.J. Reader to pair inside with



NATHAN RAY SEEBECK/USA TODAY SPORTS

Alim McNeill, who enjoyed a breakout third season in 2023. Aidan Hutchinson has emerged as one of the NFL's most productive pass-rushers, leading the league in quarterback hits while playing 90 percent of the snaps to earn his first Pro Bowl nod. The Lions are still searching for a tag-team partner opposite him, though, signing Marcus Davenport in free agency and banking on a healthy James Houston — he broke his ankle in Week 2 and didn't return until the NFC title game — producing like he did as a rookie surprise in 2022.

The Lions got plenty of production from their linebackers, led by veteran Alex Anzalone, who remains the leader of the defense. But it was the growth of Derrick Barnes and the instant impact of rookie first-round pick Jack Campbell, who showed versatility as a pass rusher, that turned a weakness into a strength, particularly against the run. Veteran Jalen Reeves-Maybin, a special-teams ace, also thrived in a third-down role late in the season, though this unit as a whole will need to improve in coverage.

The secondary is the primary concern in Detroit, which is why Holmes was busy again this offseason trying overhaul the personnel. He traded for Tampa Bay's Carlton Davis to fill the No. 1 cornerback role, signed another potential starter in free agent Amik Robertson and then used his first two draft picks to add Terrion Arnold (Alabama) and Ennis Rakestraw Jr. (Missouri) at the position. Veteran Emmanuel Moseley, who played just two snaps before suffering a second ACL tear in as many years, also is back. So is Brian Branch, who impressed as a rookie at nickel corner, along with a rangy, ball-hawking tandem at safety in Kerby Joseph and Ifeatu Melifonwu. But the Lions' secondary struggled in third-and-long situations — highlighted by an NFL-worst 69 completions of 20-plus yards allowed — and got torched by top receivers down the stretch last season. So the hope is all that competition — "I mean, it's a bloodbath in there now," Holmes said after the draft — fixes this group's Achilles heel.

SPECIALISTS

The Lions still haven't found stability at kicker, but they turned to veteran Michael Badgley again to finish 2023 and he remains the incumbent. Limited range is a concern, as the Lions attempted only two field goals of 50-plus yards, but Campbell's aggressive fourth-down decisions also play a factor in that.

Punter isn't a problem, as Jack Fox remains one of the most consistent legs in the league, whether flipping the field or pinning opponents deep. Fox's arm also is a weapon for special-teams coordinator Dave Fipp, whose unit is 8-for-10 on fake-punt attempts over the last three seasons. Raymond is a reliable threat as a punt returner, but the kick-return job will be up for grabs in camp

FINAL ANALYSIS

This is uncharted territory for the Lions, defending a division title and openly talking about Super Bowl aspirations. "I want the big one, and I want it now," Sewell says. But thanks to Holmes' draft savvy, Detroit does have one of the NFL's most complete rosters, and perhaps no team has a better sense of identity and buy-in than Dan Campbell's Lions. The schedule gets tougher, but for a team that won at Kansas City, Green Bay, Tampa Bay and New Orleans last season -— with a rabid fanbase flooding opposing stadiums with a sea of Honolulu blue — there's no reason to think it can't take the next step.

DET

2023 RESULTS (12-5)

Sept. 7	at Kansas City	W	21-10
Sept. 17	Seattle (ot)	L	31-37
Sept. 24	Atlanta	W	20-6
Sept. 28	at Green Bay	W	34-20
Oct. 8	Carolina	W	42-24
Oct. 15	at Tampa Bay	W	20-6
Oct. 22	at Baltimore	L	6-38
Oct. 30	Las Vegas	W	26-14
Nov. 12	at L.A. Chargers	W	41-38
Nov. 19	Chicago	W	31-26
Nov. 23	Green Bay	L	22-29
Dec. 3	at New Orleans	W	33-28
Dec. 10	at Chicago	L	13-28
Dec. 17	Denver	W	42-17
Dec. 24	at Minnesota	W	30-24
Dec. 30	at Dallas	L	19-20
Jan. 7	Minnesota	W	30-20
Postseason			
Jan. 14	L.A. Rams	W	24-23
Jan. 21	Tampa Bay	W	31-23
Jan. 28	at San Francisco	L	31-34

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	394.8	3	2
Rushing	135.9	5	4
Passing	258.9	2	1
Scoring	27.1	5	3
Third Down %	41.5	11	7
Points/Play	0.410	5	3

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	336.1	19	9
Rushing	88.8	2	2
Passing	247.4	27	13
Scoring	23.2	23	10
Interceptions	16	T11	6
Sacks	41	T23	T9
Opp. Pts./Play	0.390	28	12
TO Differential	0	T16	T8

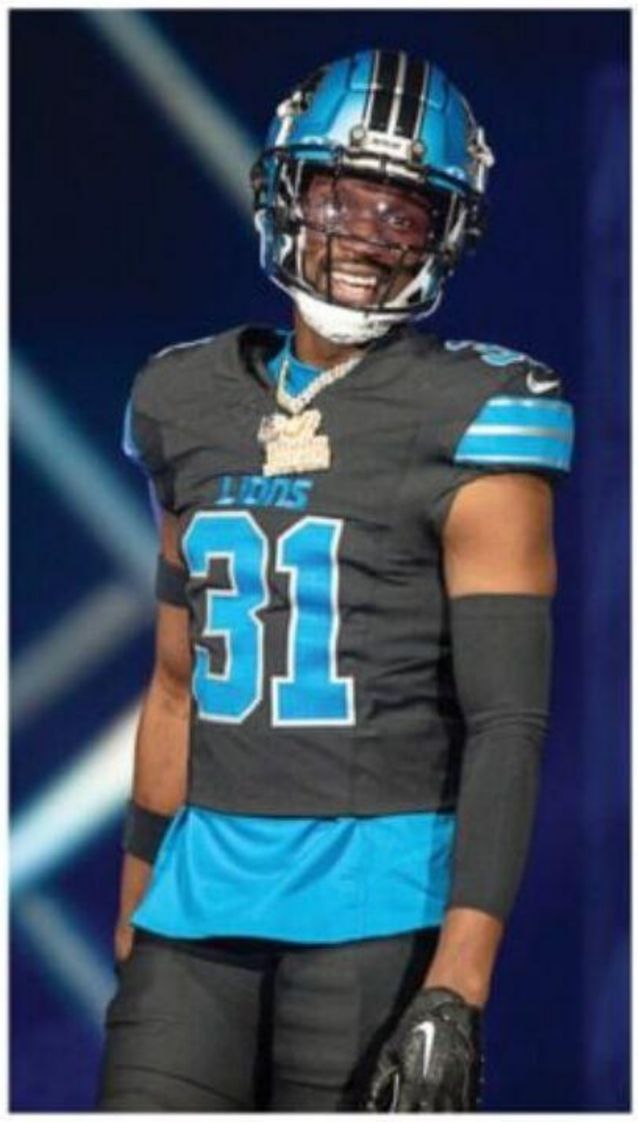
2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Jared Goff	605	407	4,575	30	12
RUSHING	**ATT**		**YDS**	**AVG**	**TD**
David Montgomery	219		1,015	4.6	13
Jahmyr Gibbs	182		945	5.2	10
Craig Reynolds	41		179	4.4	1
RECEIVING	**REC**		**YDS**	**AVG**	**TD**
Amon-Ra St. Brown	119		1,515	12.7	10
Sam LaPorta	86		889	4.2	10
Jahmyr Gibbs	52		316	6.1	1
Josh Reynolds	40		608	15.2	5
Kalif Raymond	35		489	14.0	1
Jameson Williams	24		354	14.8	2

KICKING: Riley Patterson, 15-17 FGs, 35-37 PATs, 80 points
TACKLES: Alex Anzalone, 129; Jack Campbell, 89
SACKS: Aidan Hutchinson, 11.5; Alim McNeill, 5.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Kerby Joseph, 4; Brian Branch, 3; Jerry Jacobs, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

BLACK IS BACK The Lions unveiled new uniform designs in April, including subtle changes to their traditional Honolulu blue home and white road jerseys. But the **all-black alternate uniforms** came at the request of head coach Dan Campbell, who played for Detroit from 2006-08 when the team last had a black jersey option during the failed Matt Millen era. So when Campbell pitched the idea, team president Rod Wood said, "'I'll make a deal: When you win the division, I'll bring the black jerseys back.' I went out on a limb and thankfully he delivered." Detroit's entire war room, including owner Sheila Hamp, wore black No. 89 jerseys in Campbell's honor on Day 3 of the draft.



PRICE OF SUCCESS Winning comes with a price, as Lions season-ticket holders discovered this winter, with many seeing price increases of more than 75 percent on their 2024 renewals. After minimal or no increases in 2022 and '23, Wood acknowledged that it was a "painful" jump in price for loyal fans, "but even with this, I think we're still the cheapest tickets in our division." Wood also said the renewal rates were over 95 percent, with more than 20,000 people on the waitlist.

MOVING TIME The Lions moved back to downtown Detroit in 2002 when they opened Ford Field in what is now the heart of the city's sports and entertainment district. Now the team's headquarters could follow suit, as the Lions continue to explore options to relocate their practice facility and football operations from Allen Park, where they've outgrown a 225,000-square-foot complex and 22-acre development. One possibility is part of the I-375 redevelopment area on the east side of the city.

SCOUTING THE LIONS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP DETROIT "Offensive coordinator Ben Johnson has done a great job with Jared Goff, transforming his confidence and efficiency. The play-calling expertise is a huge plus for Detroit. … They've got one of the top wide receivers in the NFL in Amon-Ra St. Brown. … I still think Jameson Williams is going to be a big factor this year. … Sam LaPorta was a great draft pick by general manager Brad Holmes. … Penei Sewell is about the only right tackle in the NFL that's in the class of Lane Johnson. … Frank Ragnow is one tough customer at center. … The decision to draft Aidan Hutchinson keeps paying dividends. His all-out style makes this defense go. … Gotta say, the linebacker group is rock-solid with Alex Anzalone, Jack Campbell and Derrick Barnes. … Signing D.J. Reader gives this defense a real two-gapping presence. He's massive and hard to move. … Hard to find a better young safety tandem than Brian Branch and Kerby Joseph. … Drafting Terrion Arnold fixes one corner spot. Carlton Davis III is another story altogether. He's been shaky lately. … I like the depth they added with Ennis Rakestraw Jr. … Dan Campbell's influence is obvious all over this roster. His hard-nosed mentality defines this team. … The teamwork between Campbell and Holmes drives this bus. The Lions are a legit Super Bowl contender."

DAVID RODRIGUEZ MUNOZ

2024 LIONS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
16 Goff, Jared	QB	6-4	217	8	California	T-LAR-21	D1-LAR-16
2 Hooker, Hendon	QB	6-3	220	1	Tennessee	D3a-23	D3a-Det-23
8 Sudfeld, Nate	QB	6-6	230	7	Indiana	FA-22	D6-Was-16

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
36 Funk, Jake	RB	5-10	205	3	Maryland	FA-24	D7-LAR-21
26 Gibbs, Jahmyr	RB	5-9	200	1	Alabama	D1a-23	D1a-Det-23
39 Jefferson, Jermar	RB	5-10	215	2	Oregon State	FA-23	D7-Det-21
28 Knight, Zonovan	RB	5-11	209	2	NC State	FA-23	FA-NYJ-22
5 Montgomery, David	RB	5-11	224	5	Iowa State	FA-Chi-23	D3-Chi-19
13 Reynolds, Craig	RB	5-11	216	4	Kutztown	FA-23	FA-Was-19

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
15 Alexander, Maurice	WR	5-11	174	1	FIU	FA-22	FA-Det-22
Davis, Kaden	WR	6-1	190	1	NW Missouri State	FA-24	FA-Den-22
86 Firkser, Anthony	TE	6-2	245	6	Harvard	FA-23	FA-NYJ-17
84 Fountain, Daurice	WR	6-2	210	3	Northern Iowa	FA-23	D5-Ind-18
18 Green, Antoine	WR	6-2	199	1	North Carolina	D7-23	D7-Det-23
Hesse, Parker	TE	6-3	253	3	Iowa	FA-24	FA-Ten-19
85 Kennedy, Tom	WR	5-10	195	3	Bryant	FA-23	FA-Det-19
87 LaPorta, Sam	TE	6-3	245	1	Iowa	D2a-23	D2a-Det-23
82 Mitchell, James	TE	6-4	246	2	Virginia Tech	D5-22	D5-Det-22
19 Peoples-Jones, Don.	WR	6-2	204	4	Michigan	T-Cle-23	D6-Cle-20
11 Raymond, Kalif	WR	5-8	180	7	Holy Cross	FA-Ten-21	FA-Den-16
10 Smith, Tre'Quan	WR	6-2	210	6	UCF	FA-24	D3-NO-18
14 St. Brown, Amon-Ra	WR	6-0	202	3	USC	D4a-21	D4a-Det-21
9 Williams, Jameson	WR	6-1	180	2	Alabama	D1b-22	D1b-Det-22
89 Wright, Brock	TE	6-5	250	3	Notre Dame	FA-21	FA-Det-21

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
74 Awosika, Kayode	G	6-3	315	3	Buffalo	FA-22	FA-Phi-21
68 Decker, Taylor	T	6-7	318	8	Ohio State	D1-16	D1-Det-16
66 Farniok, Matt	G	6-5	316	3	Nebraska	FA-23	D7-Dal-21
76 Galvin, Connor	OL	6-7	300	1	Baylor	FA-23	FA-Det-23
60 Glasgow, Graham	OL	6-6	315	8	Michigan	FA-Den-23	D3-Det-16
52 Muti, Netane	G	6-3	307	4	Fresno State	FA-24	D6-Den-20
62 Niese, Michael	OL	6-5	295	1	Temple	FA-23	FA-Den-22
77 Ragnow, Frank	C	6-5	310	6	Arkansas	D1-18	D1-Det-18
58 Sewell, Penei	T	6-5	335	3	Oregon	D1-21	D1-Det-21
70 Skipper, Dan	T	6-9	330	3	Arkansas	FA-23	FA-Dal-17
75 Sorsdal, Colby	OL	6-6	315	1	William & Mary	D5-23	D5-Det-23
71 Zeitler, Kevin	G	6-4	340	12	Wisconsin	FA-Bal-24	D1b-Cin-12

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
95 Betts, Matt	DL	6-3	250	1	Laval	FA-24	FA-Chi-19
79 Cominsky, John	DL	6-5	285	5	Charleston (WV)	W-Atl-22	D4b-Atl-19
92 Davenport, Marcus	DL	6-6	265	6	UTSA	FA-Min-24	D1-NO-18
41 Houston, James	DL	6-1	245	2	Jackson State	D6b-22	D6b-Det-22
97 Hutchinson, Aidan	DL	6-7	268	2	Michigan	D1a-22	D1a-Det-22
99 Martin, Brodric	DL	6-5	330	1	Western Kentucky	D3b-23	D3b-Det-23
54 McNeill, Alim	DL	6-2	315	3	NC State	D3a-21	D3a-Det-21
91 Onwuzurike, Levi	DL	6-3	290	3	Washington	D2-21	D2-Det-21
93 Paschal, Josh	DL	6-3	274	2	Kentucky	D2-22	D2-Det-22
Peko, Kyle	DT	6-1	305	5	Oregon State	FA-Ten-24	FA-Den-16
98 Reader, D.J.	DL	6-3	335	8	Clemson	FA-Cin-24	D5b-Hou-16
90 Smith, Chris	DL	6-1	305	1	Notre Dame	FA-23	FA-Det-23

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
50 Agude, Mitchell	LB	6-4	245	1	Miami	FA-23	FA-Mia-23
34 Anzalone, Alex	LB	6-3	238	7	Florida	FA-NO-21	D3b-NO-17
55 Barnes, Derrick	LB	6-0	240	3	Purdue	D4b-21	D4b-Det-21
46 Campbell, Jack	LB	6-5	243	1	Iowa	D1b-23	D1b-Det-23
42 Reeves-Maybin, Jalen	LB	6-1	226	7	Tennessee	FA-Hou-23	D4a-Det-17
44 Rodriguez, Malcolm	LB	5-11	234	2	Oklahoma State	D6a-22	D6a-Det-22

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
32 Branch, Brian	DB	6-0	203	1	Alabama	D2b-23	D2b-Det-23
23 Davis III, Carlton	CB	6-1	206	6	Auburn	T-TB-24	D2c-TB-18
24 Gilmore, Steven	CB	6-0	174	1	Marshall	FA-23	FA-Det-23
33 James, Craig	CB	5-10	195	3	Southern Illinois	FA-23	FA-Min-18
40 Joseph, Brandon	S	6-0	200	1	Notre Dame	FA-23	FA-Det-23
31 Joseph, Kerby	S	6-1	203	2	Illinois	D3-22	D3-Det-22
6 Melifonwu, Ifeatu	S	6-3	210	3	Syracuse	D3b-21	D3b-Det-21
Moore, C.J.	S	5-11	199	4	Ole Miss	FA-24	FA-Det-19
4 Moseley, Emmanuel	CB	5-11	195	5	Tennessee	FA-SF-23	FA-SF-18
21 Robertson, Amik	CB	5-9	183	4	Louisiana Tech	FA-LV-24	D4b-LV-20
29 Vildor, Kindle	CB	5-11	189	4	Georgia Southern	FA-23	D5-Chi-20

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Badgley, Michael	K	5-10	188	6	Miami	FA-23	FA-Ind-18
47 Daly, Scott	LS	6-1	245	3	Notre Dame	FA-21	FA-Dal-18
3 Fox, Jack	P	6-2	218	4	Rice	FA-19	FA-KC-19

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	14	Amon-Ra St. Brown	85	Tom Kennedy
WR	9	Jameson Williams	18	Antoine Green
WR	11	Kalif Raymond	19	Don. Peoples-Jones
LT	68	Taylor Decker	70	Dan Skipper
LG	60	Graham Glasgow	74	Kayode Awosika
C	77	Frank Ragnow	62	Michael Niese
RG	71	Kevin Zeitler	75	Colby Sorsdal
RT	58	Penei Sewell		Giovanni Manu (R)
TE	87	Sam LaPorta	82	James Mitchell
QB	16	Jared Goff	2	Hendon Hooker
RB	5	David Montgomery	26	Jahmyr Gibbs

DEFENSE

DE	97	Aidan Hutchinson	79	John Cominsky
DL	54	Alim McNeill	93	Josh Paschal
DL	98	D.J. Reader	99	Brodric Martin
DE	92	Marcus Davenport	41	James Houston
LB	55	Derrick Barnes	42	Jalen Reeves-Maybin
LB	34	Alex Anzalone	46	Jack Campbell
CB	23	Carlton Davis III		Ennis Rakestraw Jr. (R)
CB		Terrion Arnold (R)	4	Emmanuel Moseley
NB	32	Brian Branch	21	Amik Robertson
SS	31	Kerby Joseph	32	Brian Branch
FS	6	Ifeatu Melifonwu	40	Brandon Joseph

SPECIALISTS

K	17	Michael Badgley	KR		Sione Vaki (R)
P	3	Jack Fox	PR	11	Kalif Raymond

79

Aidan Hutchinson led the NFL with 79 hurries last year per Pro Football Focus.

LIONS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Terrion Arnold	CB	6-0	196	Alabama
2.	Ennis Rakestraw Jr.	CB	6-0	188	Missouri
4.	Giovanni Manu	OT	6-8	350	British Columbia
4.	Sione Vaki	RB/S	5-11	211	Utah
6.	Mekhi Wingo	DT	6-1	295	LSU
6.	Christian Mahogany	OG	6-3	335	Boston College

The Lions traded up to grab Terrion Arnold, whose high-energy personality and in-your-face play style were obvious fits. That's three straight first-round picks out of Alabama for general manager Brad Holmes, who then doubled down at corner with Ennis Rakestraw Jr., adding another future starter and some needed depth. Giovanni Manu, the first Canadian university player drafted since 2016, is a project with remarkable athleticism for his size. Sione Vaki flashed his versatility as a safety who starred as a fill-in running back at Utah, but the Lions will keep him on offense for now and expect him to be a core special-teams ace. An undersized defensive tackle, Mekhi Wingo could carve out a sub-package role with his explosive first step inside and nonstop motor. The Lions needed interior offensive line depth and loved Christian Mahogany's run-blocking tenacity. As Holmes said: "He's got some dirtbag in him."

PACKERS

NFC NORTH FORECAST

2

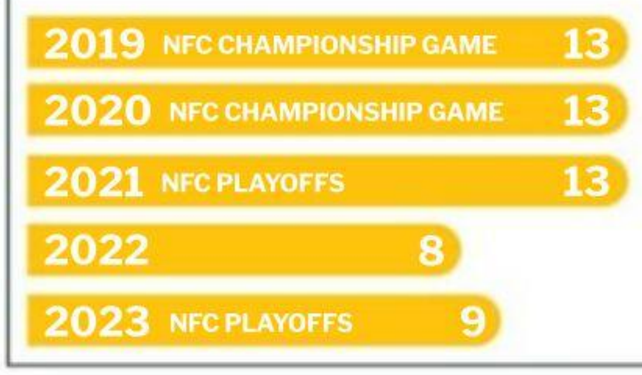
2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 6	vs. Philadelphia*	8:15
Sept. 15	Indianapolis	1:00
Sept. 22	at Tennessee	1:00
Sept. 29	Minnesota	1:00
Oct. 6	at L.A. Rams	4:25
Oct. 13	Arizona	1:00
Oct. 20	Houston	1:00
Oct. 27	at Jacksonville	1:00
Nov. 3	Detroit	4:25
Nov. 10	BYE	
Nov. 17	at Chicago	1:00
Nov. 24	San Francisco	4:25
Nov. 28	Miami	8:20
Dec. 5	at Detroit	8:15
Dec. 15	at Seattle	8:20
Dec. 23	New Orleans	8:15
Dec. 29	at Minnesota	1:00
Jan. 4/5	Chicago	TBD

*Arena Corinthians, São Paulo, Brazil

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Matt LaFleur
Record With Team: 56-27
Career Record: 56-27
Offensive Coordinator: Adam Stenavich
Defensive Coordinator: Jeff Hafley
Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator: Rich Bisaccia
Quarterbacks: Tom Clements
Running Backs: Ben Sirmans
Wide Receivers: Ryan Mahaffey
Passing Game Coordinator: Jason Vrable
Tight Ends: John Dunn
Offensive Line: Luke Butkus
Defensive Line: Jason Rebrovich
Linebackers/Running Game Coordinator: Anthony Campanile
Passing Game Coordinator (Defense): Derrick Ansley
Outside Linebackers: Mike Smith
Defensive Backs: Ryan Downard

The question seemed to catch Brian Gutekunst off guard. The Green Bay Packers general manager had just put the finishing touches on his 11-player draft class — running his three-year total to 35 selections, easily the most in the NFL. So, Gutekunst was asked, are you aiming to be among the league's youngest team every year?

"I don't think there's a goal to be one of the youngest teams. I think we want to be young, we want to be growing, we want to be getting better. We want to have young legs and to be fast," Gutekunst replied. "The age thing is just a number. It's more about our explosiveness, our speed and the competition part of it. We'll never shy away from being younger. We want to be green and growing."

If "Green & Growing" sounds like a rallying cry, it should. This is a new era of Packers football — after overcoming a 2-5 start to finish 9-8, make the playoffs as the NFC's seventh and final seed and then dominating the heavily favored Dallas Cowboys on the road in the wild-card round in what was supposed to be a rebuilding year in their first season with 2020 first-round pick Jordan Love as the starting quarterback.

Gone are the days of pushing all their chips to the middle of the table — and large salary-cap charges into the future — to keep a veteran-laden playoff contender, led by aging four-time NFL MVP Aaron Rodgers, together. Last season's success has changed the organization's paradigm.

Youthful competition is now the order of the day.

"I'm a firm believer that you can never have enough competition. It's going to bring out the best in somebody in that room," head coach Matt LaFleur says. "It doesn't just pertain to the defensive backfield or the inside backers. Look at our wide receivers. Our O-line. Shoot, our running backs, tight ends. Everybody is competing for snaps, for balls, and I just think we're going to be in a better place because of that.

"That's always the goal, to bring in as much talent as possible. Now it's our job to maximize the talent and try to push these guys to new limits."

OFFENSE

As part of that youth movement, the Packers have moved on from a player with Pro Football Hall of Fame talent each of the past three offseasons, trading wide receiver Davante Adams in 2022, shipping Rodgers to the New York Jets last year and cutting five-time All-Pro left tackle David Bakhtiari in March amid his ongoing knee problems.

In Rodgers' place, of course, is Love, whose first year as the starter got off to a shaky start before he finished the year on a Rodgers-esque heater: Love completed 70.3 percent of his passes for 2,150 yards with 18 touchdowns and just one interception (112.7 passer rating) over the final eight games.

He was even better against the Cowboys (76.2 percent for 272 yards with three touchdowns and no interceptions for a 157.2 rating) and had the ball in his hand with a berth in the NFC Championship Game on the line against the San Francisco 49ers when he threw an ill-advised, defeat-clinching interception into triple-coverage.

"Everyone in the locker room is definitely motivated to get back after it," Love says. "There's so many lessons I learned throughout this season and the team learned throughout the season that I think is going to make us better in the future."

The future is certainly bright at wide receiver and tight end, where the Packers head to training camp with 10 pass-catchers legitimately deserving of targets:

six receivers picked in the 2022 and 2023 drafts (Jayden Reed, Dontayvion Wicks, Christian Watson, Romeo Doubs, Samori Touré and Grant DuBose), two more receivers who emerged last season (feel-good ex-practice squadder Bo Melton and undrafted free agent Malik Heath) and a pair of tight ends who were a dynamic duo as rookies (Luke Musgrave, Tucker Kraft).

Although Reed led the team in receptions and receiving yards and tied for the team lead in touchdown catches, the 2024 leader could be almost anyone else. That's how balanced the group is.

At running back, the Packers swapped out veteran Aaron Jones, whom LaFleur viewed as the heart and soul of the team, for ex-Las Vegas Raiders star Josh Jacobs, who led the NFL in rushing yards in 2022. Jacobs is a workhorse back who at 26 is three years younger than Jones. "I had a few [teams] to choose from, but ultimately it came down to what I felt like I believed in with this team and feeling like I'm wanted by an organization," Jacobs says. "Young quarterback, young skill guys, good offensive line, so for a running back, I think that's what excited me the most."

Up front, despite moving on from Bakhtiari and 50-game starter Jon Runyan — and even before using their first-round pick on Arizona left tackle Jordan Morgan at No. 25 overall — the Packers felt good about their potential starting five up front: Rasheed Walker at left tackle, Elgton Jenkins at left guard, Josh Myers at center, Sean Rhyan at right guard and Zach Tom at right tackle. Jenkins and Tom are their two best — and also most versatile — linemen, while the other three will have to compete to hold on to their starting spots as training camp opens.

"I already know I'm ready. I'm ready to play," says Walker, who started 17 games (including playoffs) at left tackle last season. "That's one thing about me. I'm always going to compete — regardless of the odds against me or my side. That's why I'm really not worried. Just come compete."

DEFENSE

LaFleur dove into the Power 5 head-coaching ranks to hire Boston College's Jeff Hafley as the new defensive coordinator, hoping a more aggressive mentality would improve a group that was middle of the road in departed coordinator Joe Barry's system. While the switch from a 3-4 base scheme to a 4-3 isn't drastic, defensive linemen can get up the field and attack, which should benefit three-time Pro Bowler Kenny Clark and Devonte Wyatt, who hasn't lived up to his status as a first-round pick.

Last year, edge rusher Rashan Gary wasn't the same player he'd been before an ACL tear in November 2022. The hope is he'll make the jump to elite status, while old vet Preston Smith and 2023 first-rounder Lukas Van Ness handle the opposite side.

Gutekunst drafted two long, fast, flow-to-the-ball linebackers in second-rounder Edgerrin Cooper and third-rounder Ty'Ron Hopper with the idea of pairing one with 2022 first-rounder Quay Walker, who has been inconsistent in his first two seasons.

The Packers remade their safety position by giving ex-New York Giant Xavier McKinney a four-year, $68 million deal and drafting three safeties (Georgia's Javon Bullard, Oregon's Evan Williams, Oregon State's Kitan Oladapo). But they barely addressed cornerback, where 2021 first-rounder Eric Stokes has been plagued by injuries, and two-time All-Pro Jaire Alexander's season was derailed by injuries and a one-game suspension for conduct detrimental to the team. The Packers are counting on them to be healthy, happy and productive.

SPECIALISTS

After being handed the job, rookie kicker Anders Carlson started strong but missed at least one kick in 10 of the last 12 games, including a crucial 41-yard attempt in the team's season-ending playoff loss to the 49ers. Now, he'll have to stave off challengers. The biggest question is whether the Packers will benefit from the NFL's newfangled kickoff return rules with two-time first-team All-Pro return man Keisean Nixon on their side.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Unburdened by expectations last season, the Packers came together after an ugly start and finished strong. That should be a springboard to even greater success, but it also means they're done surprising opponents who might underestimate them. They figure to battle tooth-and-nail with the Detroit Lions for NFC North supremacy, and if Love continues to elevate his game, a Super Bowl berth isn't out of the question.

MARK HOFFMAN/MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL

2023 RESULTS (9-8)

Sept.	10	at Chicago	W	38-20
Sept.	17	at Atlanta	L	24-25
Sept.	24	New Orleans	W	18-17
Sept.	28	Detroit	L	20-34
Oct.	9	at Las Vegas	L	13-17
Oct.	22	at Denver	L	17-19
Oct.	29	Minnesota	L	10-24
Nov.	5	L.A. Rams	W	20-3
Nov.	12	at Pittsburgh	L	19-23
Nov.	19	L.A. Chargers	W	23-20
Nov.	23	at Detroit	W	29-22
Dec.	3	Kansas City	W	27-19
Dec.	11	at N.Y. Giants	L	22-24
Dec.	17	Tampa Bay	L	20-34
Dec.	24	at Carolina	W	33-30
Dec.	31	at Minnesota	W	33-10
Jan.	7	Chicago	W	17-9
Postseason				
Jan.	14	at Dallas	W	48-32
Jan.	20	at San Francisco	L	21-24

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	345.5	11	7
Rushing	112.1	15	9
Passing	233.4	12	7
Scoring	22.5	12	7
Third Down %	47.1	5	4
Points/Play	0.387	7	4

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	335.1	17	8
Rushing	128.3	28	13
Passing	206.8	9	4
Scoring	20.6	10	5
Interceptions	7	31	16
Sacks	45	T16	5
Opp. Pts./Play	0.334	12	5
TO Differential	0	T16	T8

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Jordan Love	579	372	4,159	32	11

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Aaron Jones	142	656	4.6	2
AJ Dillon	178	613	3.4	2
Jordan Love	50	247	4.9	4

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Jayden Reed	64	793	12.4	8
Romeo Doubs	59	674	11.4	8
Dontayvion Wicks	39	581	14.9	4
Luke Musgrave	34	352	10.4	1
Tucker Kraft	31	355	11.5	2
Aaron Jones	30	233	7.8	1
Christian Watson	28	422	15.1	5

KICKING: Anders Carlson, 27-33 FGs, 34-39 PATs, 115 points
TACKLES: Quay Walker, 118; Isaiah McDuffie, 82
SACKS: Rashan Gary, 9.0; Preston Smith, 8.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Rudy Ford, 2; five tied with 1

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

HALL CALL? Colorful character Mike Daniels never held back in his seven seasons playing on Green Bay's defensive line, and he didn't hold back during the offseason when asked what new coordinator Jeff Hafley's system could mean for **Kenny Clark**, already a three-time Pro Bowl defensive tackle. "I'm really looking forward to seeing that smashmouth defensive mindset be implemented in Green Bay because it's a long time coming. The guys up front deserve a chance to be the playmakers of the defense," said Daniels, who played with Clark for three seasons (2016-18). "You might as well get Kenny Clark's (Pro Football) Hall of Fame jacket and just start fitting him for it right now, man."

OLÁ, BRASIL Head coach Matt LaFleur did a terrible job of hiding his displeasure with the Packers having to play a regular-season game in London in 2022, and while he certainly didn't sound overly enthusiastic about opening the 2024 season against the Philadelphia Eagles in Sao Paulo, Brazil, on Sept. 6, he seemingly is taking a better attitude for this international trip. He acknowledges there's value in facing a fellow NFC playoff contender at a neutral site instead of on the Eagles' home turf. "Hopefully, it'll be a home crowd for the Green Bay Packers," he replied when asked if he's happier playing in Brazil than at Lincoln Financial Field. "When you go to Philly and play a road game, you know it's going to be a hostile environment."

MR. PERFECT? When he was introduced as the new defensive coordinator, Hafley went on a long soliloquy about what he looked for in a safety. By the end of the lengthy description, he confessed, "I guess I'm describing the perfect player to you." While saying Xavier McKinney is that perfect player would be an exaggeration, he does very much fit the picture Hafley painted that day. "I don't think any player's perfect," McKinney said when told of Hafley's vision. "But I will tell you that I'm striving for that."

SCOUTING THE PACKERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP GREEN BAY "Patience finally paid off for the Packers at quarterback as Jordan Love had a breakthrough year. This changes the fortunes of the franchise post-Aaron Rodgers. … Play-action is going to be a real factor with the Josh Jacobs signing. Jacobs has something to prove after his production dipped last season with the Raiders. … The Jayden Reed pick [in 2023] was really good by general manager Brian Gutekunst. Reed is a serious threat. … Elgton Jenkins is one of the top guards in the NFL. … With Rashan Gary healthy again, the pass rush is back in full effect. … The safe bet is that Edgerrin Cooper is going to make an impact as a rookie linebacker. … Jaire Alexander and the organization seem to be in a strange place at times. … Javon Bullard has a great chance to start immediately. … Xavier McKinney is money well spent. … Preston Smith and Gary are a great tandem. … Have to think that Lukas Van Ness' role increases this season. ... Overall, quietly, one of the top front sevens in the league. Ton of sack production, lot of finishers like Devonte Wyatt and Kenny Clark."

DAN POWERS-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 PACKERS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
6 Clifford, Sean	QB	6-2	218	1	Penn State	D5a-23	D5a-GB-23
10 Love, Jordan	QB	6-4	219	4	Utah State	D1-20	D1-GB-20
2 McGough, Alex	QB	6-3	214	1	FIU	FA-23	D7-Sea-18

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
28 Dillon, AJ	RB	6-0	247	4	Boston College	D2-20	D2-GB-20
8 Jacobs, Josh	RB	5-10	223	5	Alabama	FA-LV-24	D1b-LV-19
38 Merriweather, Ellis	RB	6-2	220	1	Massachusetts	FA-23	FA-NO-23
44 Pearson, Henry	FB	6-2	249	1	App State	FA-23	FA-GB-23
31 Wilson, Emanuel	RB	5-10	226	1	Fort Valley State	FA-23	FA-GB-23

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
84 Davis, Tyler	TE	6-4	252	4	Georgia Tech	PS-Ind-21	D6-Jac-20
87 Doubs, Romeo	WR	6-2	204	2	Nevada	D4a-22	D4a-GB-22
86 DuBose, Grant	WR	6-2	201	1	Charlotte	D7d-23	D7d-GB-23
18 Heath, Malik	WR	6-2	213	1	Ole Miss	FA-23	FA-GB-23
85 Kraft, Tucker	TE	6-5	259	1	South Dakota St.	D3-23	D3-GB-23
80 Melton, Bo	WR	5-11	189	1	Rutgers	PS-Sea-22	D7-Sea-22
88 Musgrave, Luke	TE	6-6	253	1	Oregon State	D2a-23	D2a-GB-23
16 Pitts, Thyrick	WR	6-2	201	1	Delaware	FA-23	FA-Chi-23
11 Reed, Jayden	WR	5-11	187	1	Michigan State	D2b-23	D2b-GB-23
89 Sims, Ben	TE	6-5	250	1	Baylor	W-Min-23	FA-Min-23
83 Touré, Samori	WR	6-1	191	2	Nebraska	D7d-22	D7d-GB-22
9 Watson, Christian	WR	6-4	208	2	North Dakota State	D2-22	D2-GB-22
13 Wicks, Dontayvion	WR	6-1	206	1	Virginia	D5b-23	D5b-GB-23
82 Wilson, Joel	TE	6-4	242	1	Central Michigan	FA-23	FA-Buf-23

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
73 Dillard, Andre	T	6-5	315	5	Washington State	FA-Ten-24	D1-Phi-19
74 Jenkins, Elgton	G/T	6-5	311	5	Mississippi State	D2-19	D2-GB-19
72 Jones, Caleb	T	6-9	370	2	Indiana	FA-22	FA-GB-22
71 Myers, Josh	C/G	6-5	310	3	Ohio State	D2-21	D2-GB-21
70 Newman, Royce	G/T	6-5	310	3	Ole Miss	D4-21	D4-GB-21
75 Rhyan, Sean	G	6-5	321	2	UCLA	D3-22	D3-GB-22
61 Smith, Lecitus	OL	6-3	314	2	Virginia Tech	FA-24	D6-Ari-22
77 Telfort, Kadeem	T	6-7	322	1	UAB	FA-23	FA-GB-23
78 Tenuta, Luke	T	6-8	314	2	Virginia Tech	W-Ind-22	D6-Buf-22
50 Tom, Zach	OL	6-4	304	2	Wake Forest	D4b-22	D4b-GB-22
63 Walker, Rasheed	T	6-6	324	2	Penn State	D7c-22	D7c-GB-22

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
94 Brooks, Karl	DL	6-3	296	1	Bowling Green	D6a-23	D6a-GB-23
97 Clark, Kenny	DL	6-3	314	8	UCLA	D1-16	D1-GB-16
55 Enagbare, Kingsley	DE	6-4	258	2	South Carolina	D5-22	D5-GB-22
99 Ford, Jonathan	DL	6-5	338	2	Miami	D7b-22	D7b-GB-22
52 Gary, Rashan	DE	6-5	277	5	Michigan	D1a-19	D1a-GB-19
93 Slaton, T.J.	DL	6-4	330	3	Florida	D5a-21	D5a-GB-21
90 Van Ness, Lukas	DE	6-5	272	1	Iowa	D1-23	D1-GB-23
96 Wooden, Colby	DL	6-4	273	1	Auburn	D4-23	D4-GB-23
95 Wyatt, Devonte	DL	6-3	304	2	Georgia	D1b-22	D1b-GB-22

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
51 Banks, Keshawn	LB	6-3	251	1	San Diego State	FA-23	FA-GB-23
57 Cox Jr., Brenton	LB	6-4	250	1	Florida	FA-23	FA-GB-23
58 McDuffie, Isaiah	LB	6-1	227	3	Boston College	D6b-21	D6b-GB-21
53 Mosby, Arron	LB	6-3	250	2	Fresno State	W-Car-23	FA-Car-22
56 Odumegwu, Kenneth	LB	6-6	259	1	None	FA-23	FA-GB-23
91 Smith, Preston	LB	6-5	265	9	Mississippi State	FA-Was-19	D2-Was-15
7 Walker, Quay	LB	6-4	241	2	Georgia	D1a-22	D1a-GB-22
54 Welch, Kristian	LB	6-3	240	4	Iowa	FA-23	FA-Bal-20
45 Wilson, Eric	LB	6-1	230	7	Cincinnati	PS-NO-22	FA-Min-17

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
23 Alexander, Jaire	CB	5-10	196	6	Louisville	D1-18	D1-GB-18
39 Anderson, Zayne	S	6-2	206	1	BYU	W-Buf-23	FA-KC-21
35 Ballentine, Corey	CB	5-11	196	5	Washburn	FA-22	D6-NYG-19
24 Coyle, Tyler	S	6-1	209	1	Purdue	FA-23	FA-Dal-22
30 Gilbert, Zyon	CB	6-0	193	1	Florida Atlantic	FA-23	FA-NYG-22
36 Johnson Jr., Anthony	S	6-0	205	1	Iowa State	D7c-23	D7c-GB-23
40 Johnson, Anthony	CB	6-2	205	1	Virginia	FA-23	FA-GB-23
29 McKinney, Xavier	S	6-0	201	4	Alabama	FA-NYG-24	D2-NYG-20
25 Nixon, Keisean	CB	5-10	200	5	South Carolina	FA-LV-22	FA-LV-19
22 Rochell, Robert	CB	6-0	193	3	Central Arkansas	PS-Car-23	D4-LAR-21
48 Sapp III, Benny	S	5-11	200	1	Northern Iowa	FA-23	FA-GB-23
21 Stokes, Eric	CB	6-1	194	3	Georgia	D1-21	D1-GB-21
37 Valentine, Carrington	CB	6-0	189	1	Kentucky	D7a-23	D7a-GB-23

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Carlson, Anders	K	6-5	219	1	Auburn	D6b-23	D6b-GB-23
2 Joseph, Greg	K	6-0	206	6	Florida Atlantic	FA-Min-24	FA-Mia-18
42 Orzech, Matt	LS	6-3	245	4	Azusa Pacific	FA-LAR-23	FA-Bal-19
16 Podlesny, Jack	K	6-1	180	1	Georgia	FA-24	FA-Min-23
19 Whelan, Daniel	P	6-5	216	1	UC Davis	FA-23	FA-NO-22

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	9	Christian Watson	13	Dontayvion Wicks
WR	87	Romeo Doubs	80	Bo Melton
WR	11	Jayden Reed	83	Samori Touré
LT	63	Rasheed Walker	77	Jordan Morgan (R)
LG	74	Elgton Jenkins	79	Travis Glover (R)
C	71	Josh Myers	62	Jacob Monk (R)
RG	75	Sean Rhyan	70	Royce Newman
RT	50	Zach Tom	73	Andre Dillard
TE	88	Luke Musgrave	85	Tucker Kraft
QB	10	Jordan Love	6	Sean Clifford
RB	8	Josh Jacobs	28	AJ Dillon

DEFENSE

DE	52	Rashan Gary	90	Lukas Van Ness
DT	93	T.J. Slaton	95	Devonte Wyatt
NT	97	Kenny Clark	94	Karl Brooks
DE	95	Devonte Wyatt	55	Kingsley Enagbare
WLB	7	Quay Walker	45	Eric Wilson
MLB	56	Edgerrin Cooper (R)	59	Ty'Ron Hopper (R)
SLB	58	Isaiah McDuffie	54	Kristian Welch
CB	23	Jaire Alexander	37	Carrington Valentine
CB	21	Eric Stokes	25	Keisean Nixon
SS	20	Javon Bullard (R)	33	Evan Williams (R)
FS	29	Xavier McKinney	27	Kitan Oladapo (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	17	Anders Carlson	KR	25	Keisean Nixon
P	19	Daniel Whelan	PR	25	Keisean Nixon

215

Green Bay's opponents dialed up a league-leading 215 blitzes against Jordan Love during 2023 per Pro Football Reference.

PACKERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Jordan Morgan	OT	6-5	311	Arizona
2.	Edgerrin Cooper	LB	6-2	229	Texas A&M
2.	Javon Bullard	S	5-10	198	Georgia
3.	MarShawn Lloyd	RB	5-9	220	USC
3.	Ty'Ron Hopper	LB	6-2	228	Missouri
4.	Evan Williams	S	5-11	200	Oregon
5.	Jacob Monk	C	6-3	308	Duke
5.	Kitan Oladapo	S	6-2	216	Oregon State
6.	Travis Glover	OT	6-6	317	Georgia State
7.	Michael Pratt	QB	6-2	217	Tulane
7.	Kalen King	CB	5-11	191	Penn State

The Packers took three safeties, three offensive linemen and two linebackers — all glaring positions of need. While Jordan Morgan could win the starting left tackle job by opening day, it won't be handed to him. Edgerrin Cooper and Javon Bullard are the odds-on favorites to be the starters at their positions. MarShawn Lloyd looks like a worthy No. 2 behind Josh Jacobs, while Jacob Monk looks like a steal — and the center of the future. Kalen King may be the most interesting of the bunch, though. He looked like a first-round pick after his sophomore season at Penn State; as a seventh-rounder, the chip is already on his shoulder.

MIN VIKINGS

NFC NORTH FORECAST

4

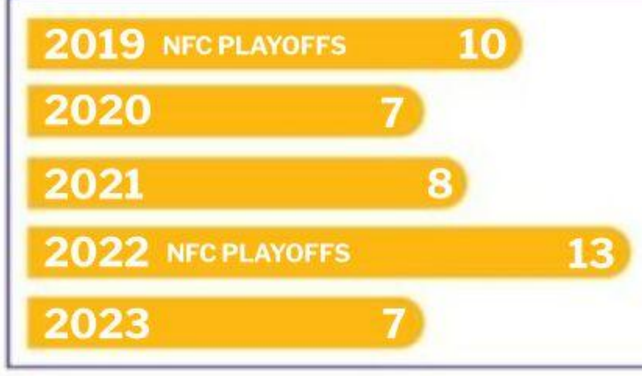
2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	at N.Y. Giants	1:00
Sept. 15	San Francisco	1:00
Sept. 22	Houston	1:00
Sept. 29	at Green Bay	1:00
Oct. 6	vs. N.Y. Jets*	9:30 a.m.
Oct. 13	BYE	
Oct. 20	Detroit	1:00
Oct. 24	at L.A. Rams	8:15
Nov. 3	Indianapolis	1:00
Nov. 10	at Jacksonville	1:00
Nov. 17	at Tennessee	1:00
Nov. 24	at Chicago	1:00
Dec. 1	Arizona	1:00
Dec. 8	Atlanta	1:00
Dec. 16	Chicago	8:00
Dec. 22	at Seattle	4:05
Dec. 29	Green Bay	1:00
Jan. 4/5	at Detroit	TBD

*Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, London

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Kevin O'Connell
Record With Team: 20-14
Career Record: 20-14
Offensive Coordinator: Wes Phillips
Defensive Coordinator: Brian Flores
Special Teams Coordinator: Matt Daniels
Quarterbacks: Josh McCown
Running Backs/Running Game Coordinator: Curtis Modkins
Wide Receivers: Keenan McCardell
Tight Ends/Passing Game Coordinator: Brian Angelichio
Offensive Line: Chris Kuper
Defensive Line: Marcus Dixon
Inside Linebackers: Mike Siravo
Passing Game Coordinator/Defensive Backs: Daronte Jones
Safeties: Michael Hutchings

The Vikings finally have their quarterback of the future. But do they have their QB of the present?

J.J. McCarthy, the national champion from Michigan, is 21, super talented and filled with the optimism that erupts from a fan base the moment its franchise uses a top-10 pick on a quarterback. He's also green.

Meanwhile, next to McCarthy on the Vikings' whopping list of 38 new faces is Sam Darnold, a 27-year-old journeyman who personifies the profound disappointment that comes when one of those top-10 quarterbacks fails miserably. He isn't green, but he's also not good.

The plan is for Kevin O'Connell — head coach, play-caller, former NFL quarterback, current QB whisperer and Super Bowl-winning offensive coordinator — to bring McCarthy along slowly while devising some sort of hocus pocus that turns Darnold — a career 59.7 percent passer with a 21-35 record with three teams — into a successful one-year bridge quarterback who shelters the rookie from the soul-crushing losses while bringing some confidence-boosting wins to the veterans who don't want to waste a year waiting on McCarthy.

Anything can happen in the NFL. But it's hard to imagine the Vikings — 7-10 last year with Kirk Cousins missing nine games (3-6) — piecing such a massive offseason overhaul together in one year and returning to the playoffs with Darnold and a rookie quarterback.

"We're trying to build a championship team with a championship mindset," says general manager Kwesi Adofo-Mensah. "We'll be judged on our results."

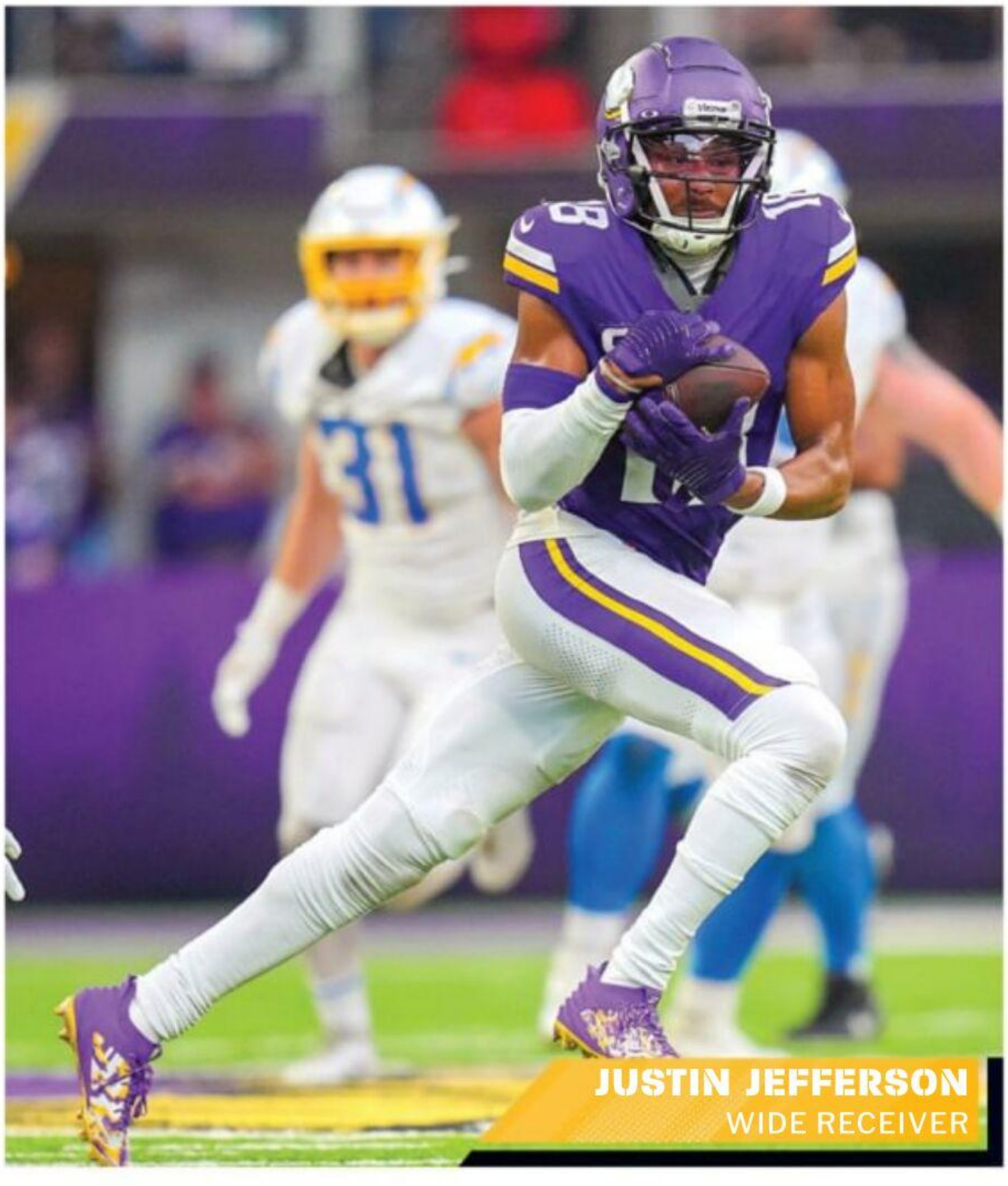
Long-term, the grades could be stellar with a seasoned McCarthy. Short-term, expect some growing pains.

OFFENSE

The quarterback has talent around him. Superstar Justin Jefferson is the best receiver in football and somehow remains a team guy who won't throw gas on a new quarterback should things get combustible early. No. 2 receiver Jordan Addison is a confident playmaker who immediately lived up to his first-round billing last year, and tight end T.J. Hockenson is coming off a career-high 95 catches as a savvy locator of holes in defenses. The Vikings, however, are thin at receiver beyond their two stars with punt returner Brandon Powell as a suitable slot guy and little of note beyond that. Also, Hockenson is coming off ACL surgery and might not return until October, which would be a big blow. Josh Oliver is a blocking tight end, and No. 3 Johnny Mundt is impactful only when no one is expecting it.

The offensive tackles are a strength, while the interior is a weakness. Left tackle Christian Darrisaw will be All-Pro sooner than later. Right tackle Brian O'Neill slipped a little last season and needs to reassert himself as one of the best at his position. The interior gets pushed around and confused too often. Center Garrett Bradbury is undersized and hasn't lived up to being a first-round pick. Right guard Ed Ingram makes glaring errors consistently. Left guard is up for grabs between backup Blake Brandel and journeyman Dan Feeney.

Former Packers running back Aaron Jones is the best offensive addition. He's 29 but finished last season with five straight 100-yard games. He still has his speed, and his instincts are infinitely superior to those of his predecessor, Alexander Mattison. O'Connell stuck with Mattison too long in 2023. Ty Chandler showed burst and a nose for daylight but had only 102 carries, 53 of them in the last four games, his only starts. O'Connell is mostly new-school, but old-school enough to know he's doomed without a much better run game than last year



JUSTIN JEFFERSON
WIDE RECEIVER

BRAD REMPEL-USA TODAY SPORTS

when the Vikings' seven rushing touchdowns tied 1962 and 1996 for the fewest in a non-strike year.

DEFENSE

Major changes at all three levels greet Brian Flores in his second season as coordinator. His creativity and exotic looks out of a 3-4 base turned predecessor Ed Donatell's 28th-ranked scoring sieve into a tie for 13th best in the league. It would have been better if not for injuries and a lack of press corners.

The top edge rushers are new. Out are Danielle Hunter, D.J. Wonnum and their 24.5 combined sacks. In are Jonathan Greenard, the 12.5-sack guy Hunter replaced in Houston; Andrew Van Ginkel, once a favorite weapon of Flores' in Miami; and first-round draft pick Dallas Turner, a physical marvel and reigning SEC Defensive Player of the Year.

The only starting linebacker returning is Ivan Pace Jr., whose instincts and toughness overcame his diminutive size and undrafted status. Replacing Jordan Hicks next to him is Blake Cashman, a younger, faster player coming off a career year in Houston.

The line is a weakness. The best of the bunch, Harrison Phillips, played too many snaps last year. Jonathan Bullard is a backup-caliber starter. Three new faces were added, but don't get too excited. Jerry Tillery, Jonah Williams and Jihad Ward signed one-year, prove-it deals worth a total of only $6.1 million. Tillery is likely the third starter. He's 27 and a former first-rounder, but he's also on his third team.

Whether new faces at cornerback will help Flores play more man coverage remains to be seen. Is Shaquill Griffin the Pro Bowl player he used to be in Seattle or the fading veteran who's with his fourth team since last spring? Is the 6-foot-4 Khyree Jackson a press-corner steal in the fourth round or a Day 3 project? Griffin will start, which allows Byron Murphy Jr. to play in the slot, where he's more effective. The other outside job would be up for grabs among Jackson, Akayleb Evans, who was benched twice last year; second-year pro Mekhi Blackmon; and Andrew Booth Jr., who is down to his last strike as a blown second-round pick in 2022.

Safety is a strength of this unit, and no one plays more three-safety looks than Flores. Wily Harrison Smith, 35, is back for a 13th season, Camryn Bynum back as the team's best tackler, and Josh Metellus is back as Flores' most versatile weapon.

SPECIALISTS

Kicker is a concern. Greg Joseph's likely replacement will have no NFL experience. Rookie sixth-round draft pick Will Reichard has the inside track over former XFL standout John Parker Romo. Reichard set the FBS career scoring record (547) at Alabama. Romo went undrafted in 2022. Punter also is a concern. Ryan Wright was outstanding as an undrafted rookie in 2022 but took a big step backward, causing the Vikings to sign Seth Vernon, an undrafted rookie in 2022. The former FCS Portland State standout spent the 2022 offseason and training camp with Atlanta and was not in the NFL last year. Kick returner is a strength. Kene Nwangwu had an NFL-high three returns for touchdowns in 2021-22 and will benefit from the league's new kickoff rules. Powell isn't a flashy punt returner but was mostly reliable through a league-high 37 returns last year.

FINAL ANALYSIS

A return to the playoffs is unlikely after a 7-10 season followed by one of the broader offseason rebuilds the Vikings have had. There is talent and solid coaching, but changing nearly 40 percent of the roster and expecting Darnold and/or McCarthy to lead it to the postseason from the rugged NFC North is a stretch. Darnold can't be expected to reverse six years as a disappointing No. 3 overall pick, while McCarthy needs time to learn and grow before he can be expected to prove himself worthy of being this year's 10th overall pick.

MIN

2023 RESULTS (7-10)

Sept.	10	Tampa Bay	L	17-20
Sept.	14	at Philadelphia	L	28-34
Sept.	24	L.A. Chargers	L	24-28
Oct.	1	at Carolina	W	21-13
Oct.	8	Kansas City	L	20-27
Oct.	15	at Chicago	W	19-13
Oct.	23	San Francisco	W	22-17
Oct.	29	at Green Bay	W	24-10
Nov.	5	at Atlanta	W	31-28
Nov.	12	New Orleans	W	27-19
Nov.	19	at Denver	L	20-21
Nov.	27	Chicago	L	10-12
Dec.	10	at Las Vegas	W	3-0
Dec.	17	at Cincinnati (ot)	L	24-27
Dec.	24	Detroit	L	24-30
Dec.	31	Green Bay	L	10-33
Jan.	7	at Detroit	L	20-30

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	347.8	10	6
Rushing	91.4	29	15
Passing	256.4	5	3
Scoring	20.2	22	11
Third Down %	38.1	18	12
Points/Play	0.321	22	11

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	333.2	16	7
Rushing	98.7	8	5
Passing	234.5	24	11
Scoring	21.3	T13	6
Interceptions	11	T19	T8
Sacks	43	T19	T6
Opp. Pts./Play	0.331	11	4
TO Differential	-12	T30	T14

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Kirk Cousins	311	216	2,331	18	5
Nick Mullens	148	100	1,306	7	8
Joshua Dobbs	151	95	895	5	5
Jaren Hall	20	13	168	0	1
RUSHING	**ATT**	**YDS**	**AVG**	**TD**	
Alexander Mattison	180	700	3.9	0	
Ty Chandler	102	461	4.5	3	
Joshua Dobbs	30	163	5.4	3	
Cam Akers	38	138	3.6	1	
RECEIVING	**REC**	**YDS**	**AVG**	**TD**	
T.J. Hockenson	95	960	10.1	5	
Jordan Addison	70	911	13.0	10	
Justin Jefferson	68	1,074	15.8	5	
K.J. Osborn	48	540	11.3	3	
Alexander Mattison	30	192	6.4	3	
Brandon Powell	29	324	11.2	1	

KICKING: Greg Joseph, 24-30 FGs, 36-38 PATs, 108 points
TACKLES: Camryn Bynum, 137; Josh Metellus, 112
SACKS: Danielle Hunter, 16.5; D.J. Wonnum, 8.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Byron Murphy Jr., 3; Camryn Bynum, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

FROM DELI COUNTER TO DRAFT **Khyree Jackson** had dropped out of Arizona Western College and was back home working the deli counter at a Harris Teeter grocery store in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. "I had just won employee of the month," he said. "So I really wasn't thinking about football, honestly." That changed. The 6-foot-4 corner went to Fort Scott (Kan.) Community College, East Mississippi, Alabama, Oregon and on to the Vikings as a fourth-round draft pick this year. "I'm the best corner in the draft," he said.

GRANDPA WAS CLUTCH Sixth-round draft pick Walter Rouse is the grandson of Vic Rouse, a star basketball player at Loyola (Ill.) who hit the game-winning shot in overtime in the 1963 national championship game against Cincinnati.

AT HOME IN A HOCKEY STATE J.J. McCarthy's mother Megan, a competitive figure skater, put J.J. on skates as a toddler. He fell in love, calling hockey "my first love." As a high school freshman, he felt he had to pick hockey or football to pursue. "It was one of the hardest decisions I ever had to make," he said.

ARMY KID Running back Aaron Jones should be able to handle the move from Green Bay to Minnesota. His parents, Vurgess and Alvin Jones Sr., both were non-commissioned officers in the United States Army. Aaron's twin brother Alvin Jr., sister Chelsirae and half-brother Xavier moved around often, growing up in Germany, Kentucky, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. Jones' father died due to COVID-19 in 2021. Jones carries some of his father's ashes in a chain around his neck.

PLAYED FOR BUD'S KID Blake Cashman didn't need directions when he left Houston for Minnesota. The native Minnesotan attended Eden Prairie High School, where he was coached by Mike Grant, son of Vikings Hall of Fame coach Bud Grant. Cashman was first-team all-state as a senior, helping the Eagles go 13-0 en route to their fourth straight big-school state title. Cashman then walked on at the University of Minnesota, where he earned a scholarship on his way to becoming a fifth-round draft pick of the Jets in 2019.

SCOUTING THE VIKINGS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP MINNESOTA "Maneuvering for Michigan quarterback J.J. McCarthy gives the Vikings their quarterback of the future after Kirk Cousins left in free agency to join the Falcons. McCarthy is a true winner with a live arm and plus mobility. Whether he's ready to start the opener is up in the air, but Sam Darnold can hold down the fort until McCarthy is ready. From the impression he's made at every stage of the draft process, I think McCarthy will be starting by September. … Those trade rumors about Justin Jefferson don't make a lot of sense to me. They don't have many weapons without him. … T.J. Hockenson is a quarterback's best friend. … I thought Aaron Jones was a sneaky-good signing. Their running game just became a lot more physical. … Didn't buy into the Christian Darrisaw trade rumors, either. Lot of smoke, no fire. … The Jonathan Greenard-Dallas Turner edge rusher tandem could be special. Replacing Danielle Hunter is a big undertaking, but these guys are up for it. … Blake Cashman is a hometown guy who played a lot of smart football in Houston last season. He's got a great nose for the football. … Harrison Smith keeps signing new deals and extending his successful run here. Great return on their investment. He's tough, smart and dependable. … Hard to see how they're going to handle the Packers' passing game with this set of corners."

MARK J. REBILAS-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 VIKINGS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
Darnold, Sam	QB	6-3	225	6	USC	FA-SF-24	D1-NYJ-18
16 Hall, Jaren	QB	6-0	207	1	BYU	D5c-23	D5c-Min-23
12 Mullens, Nick	QB	6-0	210	6	Southern Miss	T-LV-22	FA-SF-17

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
32 Chandler, Ty	RB	5-11	204	2	North Carolina	D5b-22	D5b-Min-22
37 Gaskin, Myles	RB	5-10	199	5	Washington	FA-23	D7-Mia-19
30 Ham, C.J.	FB	5-11	250	7	Augustana	FA-16	FA-Min-16
Jones, Aaron	RB	5-9	208	7	UTEP	FA-GB-24	D5b-GB-17
27 McBride, DeWayne	RB	5-10	209	1	UAB	D7-23	D7-Min-23
26 Nwangwu, Kene	RB	6-1	210	3	Iowa State	D4a-21	D4a-Min-21

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3 Addison, Jordan	WR	5-11	175	1	USC	D1-23	D1-Min-23
85 Baldwin, Daylen	WR	6-2	212	1	Michigan	FA-24	FA-Cle-22
13 Harry, N'Keal	WR	6-4	225	5	Arizona State	FA-23	D1-NE-19
87 Hockenson, T.J.	TE	6-5	248	5	Iowa	T-Det-22	D1-Det-19
81 Jackson, Lucky	WR	6-0	186	1	Western Kentucky	FA-23	FA-Min-23
9 Jackson, Trishton	WR	6-1	191	2	Syracuse	FA-21	FA-LAR-20
18 Jefferson, Justin	WR	6-1	195	4	LSU	D1a-20	D1a-Min-20
Knowles, Malik	WR	6-2	196	1	Kansas State	FA-23	FA-Min-23
86 Mundt, Johnny	TE	6-4	233	6	Oregon	FA-LAR-22	FA-LAR-17
34 Muse, Nick	TE	6-5	252	2	South Carolina	D7-22	D7-Min-22
83 Nailor, Jalen	WR	6-0	190	2	Michigan State	D6b-22	D6b-Min-22
84 Oliver, Josh	TE	6-5	259	5	San Jose State	FA-Bal-23	D3-Jac-19
4 Powell, Brandon	WR	5-8	181	5	Florida	FA-LAR-23	FA-Det-18
Sherfield, Trent	WR	6-1	206	5	Vanderbilt	FA-Buf-24	FA-Ari-18
89 Thomas, Thayer	WR	6-0	195	1	NC State	FA-23	FA-Min-23

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
56 Bradbury, Garrett	C	6-3	300	5	NC State	D1-19	D1-Min-19
64 Brandel, Blake	G	6-7	315	3	Oregon State	D6a-20	D6a-Min-20
68 Byrd, Henry	G	6-5	310	1	Princeton	FA-23	FA-Min-23
71 Darrisaw, Christian	T	6-5	315	3	Virginia Tech	D1-21	D1-Min-21
Feeney, Dan	C/G	6-4	305	7	Indiana	FA-Chi-24	D3-LAC-17
67 Ingram, Ed	G	6-3	307	2	LSU	D2b-22	D2b-Min-22
75 O'Neill, Brian	T	6-7	310	6	Pittsburgh	D2-18	D2-Min-18
79 Robinson, Tyrese	G	6-3	317	1	Oklahoma	FA-23	FA-Phi-22
76 Quessenberry, David	T	6-5	310	5	San Jose State	FA-23	D6-Hou-13

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
90 Bullard, Jonathan	DL	6-3	290	8	Florida	FA-22	D3-Chi-16
97 Phillips, Harrison	DL	6-3	307	6	Stanford	FA-Buf-22	D3-Buf-18
93 Roy, Jaquelin	DL	6-3	305	1	LSU	D5a-23	D5a-Min-23
Tillery, Jerry	DL	6-6	295	5	Notre Dame	FA-LV-24	D1-LV-19
Ward, Jihad	DL	6-5	285	8	Illinois	FA-NYG-24	D2-LV-16
Williams, Jonah	DL	6-5	275	3	Weber State	FA-LAR-24	FA-LAR-20

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
33 Asamoah II, Brian	LB	6-0	226	2	Oklahoma	D3-22	D3-Min-22
39 Beauplan, Abraham	LB	6-2	235	1	Marshall	FA-24	FA-Min-23
55 Carter II, Andre	OLB	6-6	256	1	Army	FA-23	FA-Min-23
Cashman, Blake	LB	6-1	235	5	Minnesota	FA-Hou-24	D5-NYJ-19
Greenard, Jonathan	OLB	6-3	259	4	Florida	FA-Hou-24	D3-Hou-20
Grugier-Hill, Kamu	LB	6-2	230	8	Eastern Illinois	FA-Car-24	D6-NE-16
91 Jones II, Pat	OLB	6-4	264	3	Pittsburgh	D3d-21	D3d-Min-21
40 Pace Jr., Ivan	LB	5-10	231	1	Cincinnati	FA-23	FA-Min-23
Van Ginkel, Andrew	LB	6-4	242	5	Wisconsin	FA-Mia-24	D5-Mia-19

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5 Blackmon, Mekhi	CB	5-11	178	1	USC	D3b-23	D3b-Min-23
23 Booth Jr., Andrew	CB	6-0	194	2	Clemson	D2a-22	D2a-Min-22
24 Bynum, Camryn	S	6-0	200	3	California	D4b-21	D4b-Min-21
6 Cine, Lewis	S	6-2	199	2	Georgia	D1-22	D1-Min-22
21 Evans, Akayleb	CB	6-2	198	2	Missouri	D4-22	D4-Min-22
Green, A.J.	CB	6-2	198	3	Oklahoma State	FA-24	FA-Cle-20
Griffin, Shaquill	CB	6-0	198	7	UCF	FA-Car-24	D3-Sea-17
25 Jackson, Theo	S	6-1	198	2	Tennessee	FA-22	D6-Ten-22
44 Metellus, Josh	S	5-11	207	4	Michigan	D6b-20	D6b-Min-20
7 Murphy Jr., Byron	CB	5-11	190	5	Washington	FA-Ari-23	D2a-Ari-19
22 Smith, Harrison	S	6-2	211	12	Notre Dame	D1b-12	D1b-Min-12
11 Thompson, NaJee	CB	5-11	205	1	Georgia Southern	FA-23	FA-Min-23
20 Ward, Jay	S	6-1	188	1	LSU	D4-23	D4-Min-23
38 Williams, Jaylin	CB	5-10	195	1	Indiana	FA-23	FA-Min-23
29 Williams, Joejuan	CB	6-3	212	5	Vanderbilt	FA-NE-23	D2-NE-19

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
42 DePaola, Andrew	LS	6-1	229	9	Rutgers	FA-20	FA-TB-12
Romo, John Parker	K	5-11	175	1	Virginia Tech	FA-24	FA-NO-22
Vernon, Seth	P	6-5	230	1	Portland State	FA-24	FA-Atl-22
14 Wright, Ryan	P	6-3	245	2	Tulane	FA-22	FA-Min-22

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	18	Justin Jefferson		Trent Sherfield
WR	3	Jordan Addison	83	Jalen Nailor
WR	4	Brandon Powell	13	N'Keal Harry
LT	71	Christian Darrisaw		Walter Rouse (R)
LG	64	Blake Brandel		Dan Feeney
C	56	Garrett Bradbury		Michael Jurgens (R)
RG	67	Ed Ingram	68	Henry Byrd
RT	75	Brian O'Neill	76	David Quessenberry
TE	87	T.J. Hockenson	84	Josh Oliver
QB		Sam Darnold		J.J. McCarthy (R)
RB		Aaron Jones	32	Ty Chandler

DEFENSE

DE	90	Jonathan Bullard		Jihad Ward
NT	97	Harrison Phillips	93	Jaquelin Roy
DE		Jerry Tillery		Jonah Williams
OLB		Jonathan Grenard	91	Pat Jones II
ILB		Blake Cashman		Kamu Grugier-Hill
ILB	40	Ivan Pace Jr.	33	Brian Asamoah II
OLB		Dallas Turner (R)		Andrew Van Ginkel
CB	7	Byron Murphy Jr.	21	Akayleb Evans
CB		Shaquill Griffin		Khyree Jackson (R)
SS	22	Harrison Smith	44	Josh Metellus
FS	24	Camryn Bynum	25	Theo Jackson

SPECIALISTS

K		Will Reichard (R)	KR 26	Kene Nwangwu
P	14	Ryan Wright	PR 4	Brandon Powell

1

Justin Jefferson was the only wideout in the NFL to be targeted 100 or more times and finish the season with one drop or fewer per Pro Football Reference.

VIKINGS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	J.J. McCarthy	QB	6-3	219	Michigan
1.	Dallas Turner	OLB	6-3	247	Alabama
4.	Khyree Jackson	CB	6-4	194	Oregon
6.	Walter Rouse	LT	6-6	313	Oklahoma
6.	Will Reichard	K	6-1	187	Alabama
7.	Michael Jurgens	C	6-4	311	Wake Forest
7.	Levi Drake Rodriguez	DT	6-4	290	Texas A&M-Commerce

It's not a deep draft, but it might contain one of the more impactful first rounds the Vikings have had. Having one pick (No. 108) in Rounds 2-5 stung but was offset by landing a franchise quarterback in the top 10 without having to trade the other first-round pick. Trading up again for Dallas Turner was costly but worth it for an elite edge rusher who will make an immediate impact. Khyree Jackson's length makes him a pick to watch closely as the Vikings try to play more press coverage. Walter Rouse will be groomed as the eventual swing tackle, while Will Reichard has the inside track on winning the kicking job.

FALCONS

NFC SOUTH FORECAST

2

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	Pittsburgh	1:00
Sept. 16	at Philadelphia	8:15
Sept. 22	Kansas City	8:20
Sept. 29	New Orleans	1:00
Oct. 3	Tampa Bay	8:15
Oct. 13	at Carolina	4:25
Oct. 20	Seattle	1:00
Oct. 27	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Nov. 3	Dallas	1:00
Nov. 10	at New Orleans	1:00
Nov. 17	at Denver	1:00
Nov. 24	BYE	
Dec. 1	L.A. Chargers	1:00
Dec. 8	at Minnesota	1:00
Dec. 16	at Las Vegas	8:30
Dec. 22	N.Y. Giants	1:00
Dec. 28	at Washington	TBD
Jan. 4/5	Carolina	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Raheem Morris
Record With Team: 4-7
Career Record: 21-38
Offensive Coordinator: Zac Robinson
Defensive Coordinator: Jimmy Lake
Special Teams Coordinator: Marquice Williams
Quarterbacks: T.J. Yates
Running Backs: Michael Pitre
Wide Receivers: Ike Hilliard
Tight Ends: Kevin Koger
Run Game Coordinator/Offensive Line: Dwayne Ledford
Defensive Line: Jay Rodgers
Inside Linebackers: Barrett Ruud
Outside Linebackers: Jacquies Smith
Secondary: Justin Hood

The Atlanta Falcons learned the hard way in 2023 what happens when you don't get consistent quarterback play on Sundays. The Desmond Ridder experiment failed to give Atlanta short-term stability or a long-term answer at the position, and his struggles in part led to the Falcons' disappointing 7-10 season. Head coach Arthur Smith also was replaced by Raheem Morris, a Super Bowl-winning defensive coordinator from the Los Angeles Rams. It's clear that the offseason mandate for the Falcons was to find answers at quarterback.

Rather surprisingly, the team signed quarterback Kirk Cousins to a four-year deal with $100 million guaranteed in the first two years — and selected Washington quarterback Michael Penix Jr. with the eighth overall pick in the 2024 NFL Draft. Whatever happens with the Falcons going forward will depend heavily on that unorthodox plan producing results both now and later. As Penix waits in the wings, Cousins and Morris will try to get the Falcons back to the playoffs for the first time since the 2017 season.

OFFENSE

The Falcons offense will look much more modern than it has in some time with former Rams passing-game coordinator Zac Robinson coming aboard as the team's offensive coordinator. Using three-wide receiver sets will be much more common in Atlanta than it was under Smith, although an elite running back room that features Bijan Robinson and Tyler Allgeier should allow Zac Robinson's scheme to be much more balanced and dangerous for defenses.

Let's start with Cousins. While he's coming off an Achilles injury, the former Minnesota Vikings quarterback typically throws for 4,000-plus yards in a season and knows how to spread the ball around. That's going to be huge in a Falcons offense where Cousins will absolutely be counted on to elevate the play of former first-round picks like Bijan Robinson, tight end Kyle Pitts and wide receiver Drake London. Penix will sit behind Cousins, but another injury to Cousins could force the rookie quarterback into the lineup sooner than later. He's also a natural fit for what Zac Robinson will likely want to do, given his success running a spread offense at Washington.

Bijan Robinson will be the sun, moon and stars for the Falcons' running game. He amassed more than 1,000 yards from scrimmage in his rookie season and scored eight total touchdowns. As Cousins is relied on to lead the passing game, Robinson stands to break out as a truly elite offensive star this fall. It won't be shocking if he's the best player on the roster by the time the season is over; he's that laden with potential. Allgeier is the perfect Robin to Robinson's Batman, too, being that he was a 1,000-yard rusher during his rookie season in 2022.

London leads a revamped wide receiver room that features former Chicago Bear Darnell Mooney, former Arizona Cardinal Rondale Moore and former San Francisco 49er Ray-Ray McCloud III. While Moore and McCloud provide solid depth, a bulk of the catches will likely go to London and Mooney this season. It won't be surprising to see the Falcons try to grab a veteran at the position over the summer to add more options for Cousins, but London should see a real focus in this passing attack and has potential to break out as the Atlanta version of Cooper Kupp. Trying to get back to his excellent 2021 season, Pitts leads a tight end room where he'll get a lion's share of the targets, while new tight end Charlie Woerner should be the position's best blocker.

The offensive line should return all five of its starters from 2023, with Jake Matthews at left tackle, Matthew Bergeron at left guard, Drew Dalman at cen-

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ter, Chris Lindstrom at right guard and Kaleb McGary at right tackle. That unit was built more for a run-first offense, so it'll be fascinating to see how this group adapts to Zac Robinson's more pass-friendly approach. Ryan Neuzil should be the top interior lineman off the bench, and Storm Norton will be the top swing tackle.

DEFENSE

The Falcons' defensive line has as much depth as it has in quite some time. Defensive tackles Grady Jarrett and David Onyemata are the premier players up front, but second-year defensive end Zach Harrison should step into a more prominent role after the departure of Calais Campbell in free agency.

With Jimmy Lake coming in as the new defensive coordinator, the team will work out of a foundational 3-4 scheme and drafted accordingly, with tackles Ruke Orhorhoro (Clemson) and Brandon Dorlus (Oregon) two of their biggest acquisitions of the offseason. Former Washington Commander James Smith-Williams should provide sound depth off the edge.

At outside linebacker, third-year pass-rusher Arnold Ebiketie will take a major role in getting after the quarterback. He might play better in a 3-4 front than in the old 4-3 alignment. Returning veteran Lorenzo Carter, third-year veteran DeAngelo Malone and third-round pick Bralen Trice should supplement Ebiketie. Trice in particular is a very intriguing addition, as he developed a knack for pressuring opposing quarterbacks at Washington.

The inside linebacker group is perhaps the strongest on the defense, with returning starter Kaden Elliss flanked by undrafted free-agent success Nate Landman and hyper-athletic third-year linebacker Troy Andersen. Andersen's season-ending injury last September left plenty of untapped potential on the field, so his continued ascent could be a huge boost. Fifth-round pick JD Bertrand will provide really nice depth at the position.

The secondary feels ripe for a veteran addition or two, with cornerback A.J. Terrell and free safety Jessie Bates III the only two entrenched starters entering the season. Second-year cornerback Clark Phillips III should contend for the outside spot opposite Terrell or the nickel corner spot, while free-agent addition Antonio Hamilton, former first-round pick Mike Hughes, former Green Bay Packer Kevin King and Canadian Football League standout Dee Alford should battle for depth spots. At safety, Bates will be joined by either Richie Grant or DeMarcco Hellams for the strong safety spot unless the team signs a veteran. Micah Abernathy should contend for a depth role.

SPECIALISTS

The Falcons' special teams trio is set in stone. Kicker Younghoe Koo will be joined once again by punter Bradley Pinion and long snapper Liam McCullough. Koo has become one of the most reliable kickers in the game, and Pinion provides sound play as a veteran punter.

Kickoffs will be wildly different this year because of the league rule changes, but Alford and backup running back Avery Williams will play key roles as return specialists unless others step up.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The Falcons are trying to win right now with Cousins in the lineup, and it's very possible they'll win the NFC South with what they have while getting Penix ready for the future. However, it'll be vital for the franchise to keep its focus on the here and now.

For Atlanta to contend, it'll need to mesh Cousins with Zac Robinson's scheme and the Falcons' many offensive targets sooner than later and maximize a defense that has plenty of depth but only a few star-caliber players. Making it to January football is a very realistic goal for this Falcons team. Actually making waves in the playoffs is another story altogether.

2023 RESULTS (7-10)

Sept. 10	Carolina	W	24-10
Sept. 17	Green Bay	W	25-24
Sept. 24	at Detroit	L	6-20
Oct. 1	Jacksonville	L	7-23
Oct. 8	Houston	W	21-19
Oct. 15	Washington	L	16-24
Oct. 22	at Tampa Bay	W	16-13
Oct. 29	at Tennessee	L	23-28
Nov. 5	Minnesota	L	28-31
Nov. 12	at Arizona	L	23-25
Nov. 26	New Orleans	W	24-15
Dec. 3	at N.Y. Jets	W	13-8
Dec. 10	Tampa Bay	L	25-29
Dec. 17	at Carolina	L	7-9
Dec. 24	Indianapolis	W	29-10
Dec. 31	at Chicago	L	17-37
Jan. 7	at New Orleans	L	17-48

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	334.3	17	9
Rushing	127.0	9	6
Passing	207.3	22	12
Scoring	18.9	26	14
Third Down %	40.0	13	9
Points/Play	0.294	27	14

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	321.1	11	4
Rushing	118.2	20	9
Passing	202.9	8	3
Scoring	21.9	18	7
Interceptions	8	T27	T13
Sacks	42	T21	8
Opp. Pts./Play	0.342	16	7
TO Differential	-12	T30	T14

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Desmond Ridder	388	249	2,836	12	12
Taylor Heinicke	136	74	890	5	4

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Bijan Robinson	214	976	4.6	4
Tyler Allgeier	186	683	3.7	4
Desmond Ridder	53	193	3.6	5
Cord. Patterson	50	181	3.6	0

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Drake London	69	905	13.1	2
Bijan Robinson	58	487	8.4	4
Kyle Pitts	53	667	12.6	3
Jonnu Smith	50	582	11.6	3

KICKING: Younghoe Koo, 32-37 FGs, 27-28 PATs, 123 points
TACKLES: Jessie Bates III, 132; Kaden Eliss, 122
SACKS: Calais Campbell, 6.5; Bud Dupree, 6.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Jessie Bates III, 6; Richie Grant, 1; Nate Landman, 1

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

O CAPTAIN, MY CAPTAIN Two of the Falcons' top three 2024 draft picks were captains on the same team. Quarterback **Michael Penix Jr.** and outside linebacker Bralen Trice both held positions of leadership with the Washington Huskies during their banner 2023 season.

UNDER PRESSURE According to Pro Football Focus, Trice led all of college football in quarterback pressures since 2022 with 149. That'll come in handy for a Falcons team that has historically struggled with its pass rush.

HOOK 'EM HORNS After the Falcons drafted Penix, Atlanta running back Bijan Robinson welcomed the quarterback to the team by joking about how Washington didn't have to beat Texas so badly in the 2024 Sugar Bowl. We're sure a possible rematch will be all the talk of Flowery Branch.

BACK LIKE HE NEVER LEFT New Falcons head coach Raheem Morris is actually entering his second stint with the title. Morris took over as Atlanta's interim coach in 2020 after the team fired Dan Quinn midseason. After spending three seasons with the Los Angeles Rams as a defensive coordinator, Morris now returns to familiar surroundings.

28-3? NEWS TO ME Jake Matthews and Grady Jarrett are the only two Falcons left on the team that played in Super Bowl LI. As you'll recall, that's the game where Atlanta blew a 28-3 lead to the New England Patriots in the second half. It's just about a fresh slate for Atlanta after that horrific collapse.

IRON MAN Speaking of Matthews, he's made a remarkable 161 consecutive starts since entering the league in 2014, giving him the NFL's longest active ironman streak. He'll continue to build on that outstanding longevity this fall.

FAMILY MATTER By signing with the Falcons, quarterback Kirk Cousins heads to his wife's home area of Atlanta. The two actually got married in the city and will now return there for Cousins' next stage of his career. Talk about a fascinating homecoming.

SCOUTING THE FALCONS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP ATLANTA "What a strange quarterback situation. They pay Kirk Cousins all that money and then they draft Michael Penix Jr. that high. Love Penix's upside, but they've got to play Cousins for a year or two before they plug in the younger guy. Awkward situation for Cousins and really the entire locker room. I'm sure Kirk will handle this fine, but it's a weird move for sure. They could have handled this better. … Bijan Robinson had a really productive rookie season. Everything says to me he should get more touches, not this up-and-down workload. … Lot of talent at the skill positions here [Kyle Pitts, Drake London], but they need to make better use of them. … You won't find many defensive tackles better and more reliable than Grady Jarrett. … Signing David Onyemata made the defensive line a lot stouter against the run. Overall, this front seven has some holes, especially at linebacker. They need a better group overall at that spot, especially in this division. … Seeing a lot of development from A.J. Terrell as a cover corner. He's getting better and better. … They spent big money on Jessie Bates III, and he immediately upgraded the defense. They've got to keep getting better on the defensive side of the football. … Younghoe Koo is a super-clutch kicker."

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2024 FALCONS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
18 Cousins, Kirk	QB	6-3	205	12	Michigan State	FA-Min-24	D4a-Was-12
4 Heinicke, Taylor	QB	6-1	210	6	Old Dominion	FA-Was-23	FA-Min-15

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
25 Allgeier, Tyler	RB	5-10	226	2	BYU	D5-22	D5-Atl-22
39 Burns, Robert	FB	5-11	222	1	Connecticut	FA-24	FA-Chi-23
7 Robinson, Bijan	RB	5-11	215	1	Texas	D1-23	D1-Atl-23
28 Washington Jr., Carlos	RB	5-11	220	1	SE Louisiana	FA-23	FA-Atl-23
26 Williams, Avery	RB	5-9	196	3	Boise State	D5c-21	D5c-Atl-21

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
80 Ali, Josh	WR	6-0	200	1	Kentucky	FA-22	FA-Atl-22
83 Blair, Chris	WR	6-2	198	1	Alcorn State	FA-23	FA-GB-21
Drummond, Dylan	WR	6-0	186	1	Eastern Michigan	FA-24	FA-NYG-23
Dwelley, Ross	TE	6-5	235	6	San Diego	FA-SF-24	FA-SF-18
43 Fisk, Tucker	TE	6-4	273	1	Stanford	FA-23	FA-Atl-22
87 FitzPatrick, John	TE	6-7	255	1	Georgia	D6b-22	D6b-Atl-22
12 Hodge, KhaDarel	WR	6-2	208	6	Prairie View A&M	FA-23	FA-LAR-18
5 London, Drake	WR	6-4	219	2	USC	D1-22	D1-Atl-22
81 Mack, Austin	WR	6-2	215	1	Ohio State	FA-24	FA-NYG-20
34 McCloud III, Ray-Ray	WR	5-9	190	6	Clemson	FA-SF-24	D6-Buf-18
1 Mooney, Darnell	WR	5-11	173	4	Tulane	FA-Chi-24	D5c-Chi-20
9 Moore, Rondale	WR	5-7	181	3	Purdue	T-Ari-24	D2-Ari-21
8 Pitts, Kyle	TE	6-6	247	3	Florida	D1-21	D1-Atl-21
89 Woerner, Charlie	TE	6-5	241	4	Georgia	FA-SF-24	D6-SF-20

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
65 Bergeron, Matthew	OL	6-5	318	1	Syracuse	D2-23	D2-Atl-23
67 Dalman, Drew	OL	6-3	305	3	Stanford	D4b-21	D4b-Atl-21
56 Gwyn, Jovaughn	OL	6-2	297	1	South Carolina	D7b-23	D7b-Atl-23
68 Hinton, Kyle	OL	6-2	315	2	Washburn	FA-23	D7-Min-20
66 Leglue, John	OL	6-7	310	2	Tulane	FA-23	FA-Den-19
63 Lindstrom, Chris	G	6-4	299	5	Boston College	D1a-19	D1a-Atl-19
70 Matthews, Jake	T	6-5	314	10	Texas A&M	D1-14	D1-Atl-14
76 McGary, Kaleb	T	6-6	341	5	Washington	D1b-19	D1b-Atl-19
64 Neuzil, Ryan	OL	6-3	303	2	App State	FA-22	FA-Atl-21
77 Norton, Storm	OL	6-7	317	4	Toledo	PS-NO-23	FA-Det-17
50 Swoboda, Ryan	OL	6-9	315	1	UCF	FA-23	FA-Det-23
73 Vrabel, Tyler	OL	6-6	319	1	Boston College	FA-22	FA-Atl-22
69 Wesley, Barry	T	6-7	310	1	Colorado State	FA-24	FA-Atl-23

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
Anae, Bradlee	DL	6-3	260	4	Utah	FA-NYJ-24	D5-Dal-20
91 Goldman, Eddie	DL	6-3	325	6	Florida State	FA-24	D2-Chi-15
95 Graham, Ta'Quon	DL	6-4	307	3	Texas	D5a-21	D5a-Atl-21
91 Harris, Demone	DL	6-4	272	4	Buffalo	FA-23	FA-TB-18
96 Harrison, Zach	DL	6-5	274	1	Ohio State	D3-23	D3-Atl-23
97 Jarrett, Grady	DL	6-0	288	9	Clemson	D5-15	D5-Atl-15
72 London, LaCale	DL	6-3	297	1	Western Illinois	FA-23	FA-Chi-20
90 Onyemata, David	DL	6-4	300	8	Manitoba	FA-NO-23	D4-NO-16
71 Previlon, Willington	DL	6-5	285	1	Rutgers	FA-24	FA-GB-20
96 Smith-Williams, Ja.	DE	6-3	265	4	NC State	FA-Was-24	D7b-Was-20
75 Street, Kentavius	DL	6-2	287	5	NC State	T-Phi-23	D4-SF-18
62 Togiai, Tommy	DL	6-2	296	3	Ohio State	PS-Cle-23	D4b-Cle-21

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
44 Andersen, Troy	ILB	6-4	239	2	Montana State	D2b-22	D2b-Atl-22
0 Carter, Lorenzo	OLB	6-5	264	6	Georgia	FA-NYG-22	D3-NYG-18
17 Ebiketie, Arnold	OLB	6-2	250	2	Penn State	D2a-22	D2a-Atl-22
52 Eifler, Milo	LB	6-1	228	2	Illinois	FA-23	FA-NYJ-21
55 Elliss, Kaden	ILB	6-2	238	5	Idaho	FA-NO-23	D7b-NO-19
53 Landman, Nate	ILB	6-3	238	2	Colorado	FA-22	FA-Atl-22
51 Malone, DeAngelo	OLB	6-3	246	2	Western Kentucky	D3b-22	D3b-Atl-22
45 Mutin, Donavan	LB	6-0	227	1	Houston	FA-23	FA-Ind-23
92 Ogundeji, Ade	OLB	6-4	251	3	Notre Dame	D5b-21	D5b-Atl-21

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
29 Abernathy, Micah	S	6-0	195	1	Tennessee	PS-GB-22	FA-Min-19
20 Alford, Dee	CB	5-11	177	2	Tusculum	FA-22	FA-Atl-22
3 Bates III, Jessie	S	6-1	200	6	Wake Forest	FA-Cin-23	D2-Cin-18
35 Brooks, Natrone	CB	5-11	176	1	Southern Miss	FA-23	FA-Atl-23
Cruikshank, Dane	DB	6-1	209	6	Arizona	FA-24	D5-Ten-18
41 Denis, Lukas	S	5-11	185	1	Boston College	FA-23	FA-TB-19
27 Grant, Richie	S	6-0	204	3	UCF	D2-21	D2-Atl-21
33 Hamilton Sr., Antonio	CB	6-0	195	8	South Carolina St.	FA-Ari-24	FA-LV-16
37 Hellams, DeMarcco	S	6-1	203	1	Alabama	D7a-23	D7a-Atl-23
21 Hughes, Mike	CB	5-10	191	6	UCF	FA-Det-23	D1-Min-18
32 King, Kevin	CB	6-3	200	5	Washington	FA-24	D2-GB-17
34 Phillips III, Clark	CB	5-9	184	1	Utah	D4-23	D4-Atl-23
38 Tarpley III, Tre	S	6-1	203	1	Vanderbilt	FA-23	FA-Atl-22
24 Terrell Jr., A.J.	CB	6-1	194	4	Clemson	D1-20	D1-Atl-20

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
6 Koo, Younghoe	K	5-10	193	6	Georgia Southern	FA-19	FA-LAC-17
49 McCullough, Liam	LS	6-2	247	2	Ohio State	FA-22	FA-LV-20
13 Pinion, Bradley	P	6-5	255	9	Clemson	FA-22	D5-SF-15

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	5	Drake London	9	Rondale Moore
WR	1	Darnell Mooney	34	Ray-Ray McCloud III
LT	70	Jake Matthews	77	Storm Norton
LG	65	Matthew Bergeron	68	Kyle Hinton
C	67	Drew Dalman	64	Ryan Neuzil
RG	63	Chris Lindstrom	64	Ryan Neuzil
RT	76	Kaleb McGary	77	Storm Norton
TE	8	Kyle Pitts	89	Charlie Woerner
QB	18	Kirk Cousins		Michael Penix Jr. (R)
RB	25	Tyler Allgeier		Jase McClellan (R)
RB	7	Bijan Robinson	26	Avery Williams

DEFENSE

DE	96	Zach Harrison	96	James Smith-Williams
DT	90	David Onyemata		Ruke Orhorhoro (R)
DE	97	Grady Jarrett		Brandon Dorlus (R)
OLB	17	Arnold Ebiketie		Bralen Trice (R)
MLB	55	Kaden Elliss	53	Nate Landman
MLB	44	Troy Andersen		JD Bertrand (R)
OLB	0	Lorenzo Carter	51	DeAngelo Malone
CB	24	A.J. Terrell Jr.	33	Antonio Hamilton Sr.
CB	22	Clark Phillips III	20	Dee Alford
FS	3	Jessie Bates III	23	DeMarcco Hellams
SS	27	Richie Grant	29	Micah Abernathy

SPECIALISTS

K	6	Younghoe Koo	KR	20	Dee Alford
P	13	Bradley Pinion	PR	26	Avery Williams

70

Former secondary tight end Jonnu Smith was targeted 70 times last season. No other team gave its secondary TE more than 45 targets.

FALCONS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Michael Penix Jr.	QB	6-2	216	Washington
2.	Ruke Orhorhoro	DL	6-4	294	Clemson
3.	Bralen Trice	OLB	6-3	245	Washington
4.	Brandon Dorlus	DL	6-3	290	Oregon
5.	JD Bertrand	LB	6-1	235	Notre Dame
6.	Jase McClellan	RB	5-11	212	Alabama
7.	Casey Washington	WR	6-0	200	Illinois
8.	Zion Logue	NT	6-6	314	Georgia

Michael Penix Jr. is a prolific quarterback prospect who will begin developing to eventually take over for Kirk Cousins as the Falcons' starter. Ruke Orhorhoro is a developmental defensive lineman with incredible length and sky-high potential. Bralen Trice could instantly start at outside linebacker and provide pressure on the quarterback. Brandon Dorlus should provide sound depth early in his career on the defensive line. JD Bertrand projects as a core special-teamer with good linebacker traits. Jase McClellan will provide running back depth and special teams potential, as will Casey Washington with the wide receivers group. Zion Logue will try to make the roster as a nose tackle with clear upside.

PANTHERS

NFC SOUTH FORECAST

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2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	at New Orleans	1:00
Sept. 15	L.A. Chargers	1:00
Sept. 22	at Las Vegas	4:05
Sept. 29	Cincinnati	1:00
Oct. 6	at Chicago	1:00
Oct. 13	Atlanta	4:25
Oct. 20	at Washington	4:05
Oct. 27	at Denver	4:25
Nov. 3	New Orleans	1:00
Nov. 10	vs. N.Y. Giants*	9:30 a.m.
Nov. 17	BYE	
Nov. 24	Kansas City	1:00
Dec. 1	Tampa Bay	4:05
Dec. 8	at Philadelphia	1:00
Dec. 15	Dallas	1:00
Dec. 22	Arizona	1:00
Dec. 29	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Jan. 4/5	at Atlanta	TBD

Allianz Arena, Munich, Ger.

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Dave Canales
Record With Team: First season
Career Record: First season
Offensive Coordinator: Brad Idzik
Defensive Coordinator: Ejiro Evero
Special Teams Coordinator: Tracy Smith
Quarterbacks: Will Harriger
Running Backs: Bernie Parmalee
Wide Receivers: Rob Moore
Tight Ends: Pat McPherson
Offensive Line: Joe Gilbert
Defensive Line: Todd Wash
Linebackers: Peter Hansen
Outside Linebackers: Tem Lukabu
Defensive Passing Game Coordinator: Jonathan Cooley
Senior Defensive Assistant: Dom Capers
Bert Watts: Safeties

There's nowhere to go but up for the Carolina Panthers, whose NFL-worst 2-15 record in 2023 precipitated all sorts of changes.

There's a new coach in Dave Canales, who was Tampa Bay's offensive coordinator a year ago and before that an obscure NFL assistant. There's a new general manager in Dan Morgan, the former Panthers linebacker. There are new players dotting the field everywhere.

But the quarterback remains Bryce Young, who enters Year 2 with a lot of question marks. Young's rookie season after becoming the NFL's No. 1 pick in 2023 was mostly disastrous, as he was sacked a team-record 62 times and threw only 11 touchdown passes over the course of the entire season.

The Panthers believe that surrounding Young with more help, both on the offensive line and at the skill positions, will translate into the former Heisman Trophy winner getting back on his feet. That will be 2024's biggest question — how Young performs.

OFFENSE

The worst stat about the Panthers in 2023 was this one: They never ran a single play in the fourth quarter with the lead. Not one. Their only two wins came on last-play field goals. They were invariably behind, owing to a putrid offense that got shut out entirely in the final two games of the season.

The Panthers have thus tried to remake the offense on the fly in 2024. They traded for wide receiver Diontae Johnson, who had some issues in Pittsburgh but who also had three seasons of 85-plus catches. He will likely be the new No. 1 receiver, with veteran Adam Thielen (Young's security blanket a year ago) still starting in the slot and contributing and either Jonathan Mingo or rookie Xavier Legette trying to add some firepower. Tight end Tommy Tremble came on strong at the end of the last year and is due for a larger role, with rookie Ja'Tavion Sanders also getting some early opportunities in the passing game.

Chuba Hubbard surpassed Miles Sanders as the lead back last season. Sanders was a disappointment after the Panthers went against the grain and paid big money to a free-agent running back. Hubbard will begin in that role again in 2024. Canales says that running the ball is "non-negotiable," and the Panthers invested further in the RB position with 2024 second-round pick Jonathon Brooks. The rookie, however, is coming off an ACL tear sustained in November while he was at Texas. Veteran Rashaad Penny adds name recognition to the position, although he's played in only eight games over the past two seasons.

The other most important acquisitions were relatively obscure in name recognition but literally huge both in bulk and financial outlay.

The Panthers signed offensive guard Robert Hunt in free agency away from the Dolphins by giving him an enormous $100 million contract — they considered the hulking 6-foot-6, 323-pound Hunt to be the best guard in free agency. Soon afterward they signed guard Damien Lewis to a $53 million deal, the idea being that Young, as a short quarterback, especially needs a clean pocket in the middle of the field. Those two guards will join returning starters Ikem Ekwonu (who had a fairly poor 2023) and Taylor Moton at tackle and Austin Corbett (switching to center) on an O-line that at least has the potential to make everything look better.

Last season, Young showed little of the dynamic playmaking ability he did at Alabama, often running for his life and throwing the ball away or checking it down. The Panthers were often derided for choosing him over immediate Hous-

JEREMY REPER-USA TODAY SPORTS

ton star C.J. Stroud in the 2023 draft. Stroud, of course, had a better supporting cast with the Texans, but he also played better. Young and Stroud are close friends and will forever be linked by their 1-2 status in that draft. This is the season, though, that Young must make a leap before his buddy leaves him in the dust.

DEFENSE

While the Panthers are restructuring the offense completely, the defense is mostly standing pat. Although 2023 head coach Frank Reich got fired after only 11 games, defensive coordinator Ejiro Evero and his entire coaching staff ended up getting retained by Canales, who had seen first-hand at Tampa Bay how good the Panthers could be on defense in Evero's 3-4 scheme.

The big loss: Brian Burns, whom the Panthers decided not to pay the $30 million or so he wanted per year in a contract extension. Instead, Carolina traded its best pass-rusher of the past several years in March to the New York Giants, and Burns' pressure off the edge will be sorely missed.

The Panthers hope to replace Burns' production with a couple of proven veterans. Jadeveon Clowney, who grew up in nearby Rock Hill, South Carolina, and played collegiately at South Carolina, comes to his hometown team from Baltimore at age 31 off a 9.5-sack season. And D.J. Wonnum, another former Gamecock, signed with the Panthers from Minnesota, where he had eight sacks in 2023.

The Panthers' best player a year ago got rewarded with a major contract extension in 2024 (four years, $96 million, with more than $63 million guaranteed). That would be Derrick Brown, a defensive tackle whose strength and nose for the ball are particularly important against the run. He has to have a big year once again.

The Panthers will miss heat-seeking linebacker Frankie Luvu, who signed with Washington in the offseason. They replaced him with Josey Jewell, an underrated pickup, and should get a boost with the return of veteran inside linebacker Shaq Thompson from a knee injury. The secondary is OK but needs more takeaways. Talented cornerback Jaycee Horn has to stay healthy — he has missed 57 percent of the games in his first three NFL seasons.

SPECIALISTS

The Panthers have more stability here than most teams. Kicker Eddy Piñeiro was responsible for the team's only two wins in 2023 with last-play field goals and is 10-for-12 in his NFL career from 50-plus yards. Punter Johnny Hekker remains one of the NFL's best. Punt returner Ihmir Smith-Marsette will likely make the team again based on that skill, while kickoff returner may be up in the air but could go again to running back Raheem Blackshear.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Canales has brought an injection of energy and seems to have a good plan for helping Young. That relationship will be essential for both men's careers, as the Panthers have staked much of their future on Young and hired Canales in large part to see if he can be the magic key to unlock the former Heisman winner's potential. The Panthers' defense will again keep them in most games, but Carolina must prove it can score. Tripling the Panthers' win total from 2023 would be a good result, but that would only result in a 6-11 record.

This is a team likely still a year away from truly contending in the NFC South. What might change that? Massive years from new acquisitions like Johnson and Legette at wide receiver and Clowney and Wonnum as pass-rushers, as well as big-time production from the revamped offensive line. But, most of all, it hinges on Young.

CAR

2023 RESULTS (2-15)

Sept. 10	at Atlanta	L	10-24
Sept. 18	New Orleans	L	17-20
Sept. 24	at Seattle	L	27-37
Oct. 1	Minnesota	L	13-21
Oct. 8	at Detroit	L	24-42
Oct. 15	at Miami	L	21-42
Oct. 29	Houston	W	15-13
Nov. 5	Indianapolis	L	13-27
Nov. 9	at Chicago	L	13-16
Nov. 19	Dallas	L	10-33
Nov. 26	at Tennessee	L	10-17
Dec. 3	at Tampa Bay	L	18-21
Dec. 10	at New Orleans	L	6-28
Dec. 17	Atlanta	W	9-7
Dec. 24	Green Bay	L	30-33
Dec. 31	at Jacksonville	L	0-26
Jan. 7	Tampa Bay	L	0-9

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	265.3	32	16
Rushing	104.1	20	11
Passing	161.2	32	16
Scoring	13.9	T31	16
Third Down %	34.1	27	15
Points/Play	0.215	32	16

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	293.9	4	1
Rushing	122.4	23	11
Passing	171.5	3	1
Scoring	24.5	29	13
Interceptions	8	T27	T13
Sacks	27	32	16
Opp. Pts./Play	0.409	30	14
TO Differential	-9	T25	12

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Bryce Young	527	315	2,877	11	10
Andy Dalton	58	34	361	2	0

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Chuba Hubbard	238	902	3.8	5
Miles Sanders	129	432	3.3	1
Bryce Young	39	253	6.5	0

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Adam Thielen	103	1,014	9.8	4
Jonathan Mingo	43	418	9.7	0
Chuba Hubbard	39	233	6.0	0
DJ Chark Jr.	35	525	15.0	5

KICKING: Eddy Piñeiro, 25-29 FGs, 17-20 PATs, 92 points
TACKLES: Frankie Luvu, 125; Derrick Brown, 103
SACKS: Brian Burns, 8.0; Frankie Luvu, 5.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Xavier Woods, 2; six tied with 1

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

WHO ARE YOU AGAIN? New Panthers head coach Dave Canales was an obscure assistant coach up until recently, and he also looks young (Canales is 43). So perhaps it isn't surprising that new Carolina receiver Diontae Johnson had an entire introductory dinner with some of Carolina's coaching staff without figuring out that Canales was actually the boss. "To be honest, at first, I didn't know he was the head coach," Johnson told reporters. "He was just talking, and the energy he brings — after the dinner, somebody told me that he was the head coach, and I was so surprised. … I'm excited to play for him."

GAMECOCKS RULE While the Panthers are based in North Carolina, the University of South Carolina will have a major impact on this year's roster. **Xavier Legette**, the Panthers' first-round draft choice, grew up in tiny Mullins, Sout Carolina, and was a Gamecock in college, where he sometimes would face off with current Carolina cornerback Jaycee Horn in practice. And in the offseason, the Panthers signed edge rushers Jadeveon Clowney and D.J. Wonnum, who both played for the Gamecocks. Clowney was the NFL Draft's No. 1 overall pick in 2014 after an extraordinary career at South Carolina.

TEXAS TWO-STEP The Panthers hadn't selected a player from the University of Texas since they took offensive tackle Blake Brockermeyer in the first round of their very first NFL draft, in 1995. Then they took two in two days in April, picking teammates Jonathon Brooks (running back) and Ja'Tavion Sanders (tight end). Both are expected to contribute immediately for an offense that had the firepower of a rusty cigarette lighter in 2023.

THE CANALES BOOK Canales is a published author — but the book he co-wrote with his wife Lizzy Canales doesn't have much football in it. Instead, it is a deeply personal, faith-based book called "This Marriage? The Question That Changed Everything" that was published in 2022 while Canales was an assistant coach with the Seattle Seahawks.

SCOUTING THE PANTHERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP CAROLINA "Compared to C.J. Stroud, Bryce Young had a really tough rookie season. Some of that is from his bad circumstances and supporting cast. Some of that stemmed from his lack of height and batted passes and being unable to stay up when he faced contact. Getting Young going is Job No. 1 for new head coach Dave Canales. … Adam Thielen keeps creating separation with slick routes and reliable hands for a ton of first downs. Hard to fathom how bad this offense would be without him. … The Ikem Ekwonu pick is looking like a major miss. He struggles out there, especially in one-on-one pass blocking situations. … Like the Xavier Legette pick. He's got great speed and leaping ability. That should help Young out with some better odds on 50-50 balls. … This isn't a good offensive line. That's hard to fix. … Derrick Brown getting the big deal instead of Brian Burns is kind of a head-scratcher decision. Most teams would pay the edge rusher if it's an either-or kind of deal. … Josey Jewell is one of the grittiest inside 'backers around. … Jadeveon Clowney still has some juice. Now, he gets to play for his hometown team. … They really need a healthy season from Jaycee Horn."

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2024 PANTHERS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
14 Dalton, Andy	QB	6-2	220	13	TCU	FA-NO-23	D2-Cin-11
9 Young, Bryce	QB	5-10	204	1	Alabama	D1-23	D1-Car-23

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3 Blackshear, Raheem	RB	5-9	190	2	Virginia Tech	FA-22	FA-Buf-22
34 Boone, Mike	RB	5-10	206	6	Cincinnati	FA-24	FA-Min-18
33 Brown, Spencer	RB	6-0	220	1	UAB	FA-22	FA-Car-21
28 Cohen, Tarik	RB	5-6	191	4	North Carolina A&T	FA-23	D4-Chi-17
30 Hubbard, Chuba	RB	6-1	210	3	Oklahoma State	D4-21	D4-Car-21
Penny, Rashaad	RB	5-11	220	6	San Diego State	FA-Phi-24	D1-Sea-18
6 Sanders, Miles	RB	5-11	211	5	Penn State	FA-Phi-23	D2a-Phi-19

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
18 Camp, Jalen	WR	6-2	220	1	Georgia Tech	FA-23	D6-Jac-21
5 Johnson, Diontae	WR	5-10	183	5	Toledo	T-Pit-24	D3a-Pit-19
88 Marshall Jr., Terrace	WR	6-2	200	3	LSU	D2-21	D2-Car-21
85 Matthews, Jordan	TE	6-3	236	7	Vanderbilt	FA-23	D2-Phi-14
15 Mingo, Jonathan	WR	6-2	225	1	Ole Miss	D2-23	D2-Car-23
83 Moore, David	WR	6-0	219	5	East Central	FA-TB-24	D7-Sea-17
48 Pierce Jr., Chris	TE	6-3	230	1	Vanderbilt	FA-23	FA-Ari-22
87 Sims, Cam	WR	6-5	214	6	Alabama	FA-23	FA-Was-18
11 Smith-Marsette, Ihmir	WR	6-1	185	3	Iowa	T-KC-23	D5-Min-21
86 Strachan, Mike	WR	6-5	225	3	Charleston	FA-23	D7-Ind-21
84 Sullivan, Stephen	TE	6-5	245	2	LSU	FA-20	D7-Sea-20
19 Thielen, Adam	WR	6-2	200	10	Minnesota State	FA-Min-23	FA-Min-13
80 Thomas, Ian	TE	6-4	260	6	Indiana	D4a-18	D4a-Car-18
82 Tremble, Tommy	TE	6-4	250	3	Notre Dame	D3b-21	D3b-Car-21

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
70 Christensen, Brady	G	6-6	300	3	BYU	D3a-21	D3a-Car-21
63 Corbett, Austin	G	6-4	305	6	Nevada	FA-LAR-22	D2a-Cle-18
65 DiRenzo, J.D.	OL	6-6	315	1	Rutgers	FA-23	FA-Car-23
79 Ekwonu, Ikem	T	6-4	320	2	NC State	D1-22	D1-Car-22
50 Hunt, Robert	OL	6-6	330	4	Louisiana	FA-Mia-20	D2a-Mia-20
66 Jensen, Nash	G	6-4	329	1	North Dakota St.	FA-23	FA-Car-23
61 Lee, Ricky	T	6-6	305	1	North Carolina A&T	FA-23	FA-Car-23
68 Lewis, Damien	G	6-2	327	4	LSU	FA-Sea-24	D3-Sea-20
64 Mays, Cade	G	6-6	325	2	Tennessee	D6b-22	D6b-Car-22
72 Moton, Taylor	T	6-5	325	7	Western Michigan	D2b-17	D2b-Car-17
77 Nijman, Yosh	T	6-7	314	4	Virginia Tech	FA-GB-24	FA-GB-19
76 Traore, Badara	OL	6-7	327	2	LSU	FA-23	FA-Car-23
62 Zavala, Chandler	G	6-5	325	1	NC State	D4-23	D4-Car-23

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
95 Brown, Derrick	DE	6-5	320	4	Auburn	D1-20	D1-Car-20
93 Ray, LaBryan	DT	6-4	290	1	Alabama	FA-23	FA-NE-22
94 Robinson, A'Shawn	DL	6-4	330	8	Alabama	FA-NYG-24	D2-Det-16
Smith, T.J.	DL	6-3	300	2	Arkansas	FA-Min-24	FA-LAC-20
91 Thurman, Nick	DT	6-4	295	2	Houston	FA-23	FA-Hou-18
99 Tuttle, Shy	DE	6-3	300	5	Tennessee	FA-NO-23	FA-NO-19
92 Williams, Raequan	DE	6-4	305	2	Michigan State	FA-22	FA-Phi-20

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
90 Barno, Amaré	OLB	6-6	245	2	Virginia Tech	D6a-22	D6a-Car-22
45 Chaisson, K'Lavon	OLB	6-3	245	4	LSU	FA-Jac-24	D1-Jac-20
53 Cherelus, Claudin	LB	6-2	230	1	Alcorn State	W-NYJ-23	FA-NYJ-23
7 Clowney, Jadeveon	OLB	6-5	255	10	South Carolina	FA-Bal-24	D1-Hou-14
33 Davis, Tae	LB	6-0	222	5	Chattanooga	FA-23	FA-NYG-18
Gill, Cam	OLB	6-3	240	4	Wagner	FA-TB-24	FA-TB-20
47 Jewell, Josey	ILB	6-2	236	6	Iowa	FA-Den-24	D4a-Den-18
52 Johnson, D.J.	OLB	6-4	270	1	Oregon	D3-23	D3-Car-23
46 Leota, Eku	OLB	6-4	257	1	Auburn	FA-23	FA-Car-23
54 Thompson, Shaq	LB	6-0	230	9	Washington	D1-15	D1-Car-15
43 Vilain, Luiji	OLB	6-4	252	2	Wake Forest	W-Min-23	FA-Min-22
98 Wonnum, D.J.	OLB	6-5	258	4	South Carolina	FA-Min-24	D4a-Min-20
57 Wooten, Chandler	LB	6-3	232	2	Auburn	FA-22	FA-Car-22

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
32 Bootle, Dicaprio	CB	5-10	180	1	Nebraska	FA-23	FA-KC-21
27 Cook, Alex	S	6-1	196	1	Washington	W-NYG-23	FA-NYG-23
42 Franklin Jr., Sam	S	6-3	210	4	Temple	FA-20	FA-Car-20
20 Fuller, Jordan	S	6-2	203	4	Ohio State	FA-LAR-24	D6-LAR-20
13 Hill, Troy	CB	5-11	180	9	Oregon	FA-23	FA-Cin-15
8 Horn, Jaycee	CB	6-1	200	3	South Carolina	D1-21	D1-Car-21
23 Jackson, Dane	CB	5-11	180	4	Pittsburgh	FA-Buf-24	D7-Buf-20
31 Jackson, Lamar	CB	6-2	212	4	Nebraska	FA-23	FA-NYJ-20
29 Jamison, D'Shawn	CB	5-9	185	1	Texas	W-SF-23	FA-SF-23
37 Parker, A.J.	DB	5-11	185	2	Kansas State	FA-23	FA-Det-21
22 Robinson, Jammie	S	5-11	195	1	Florida State	D5-23	D5-Car-23
21 Scott, Nick	S	5-11	200	5	Penn State	FA-Cin-24	D7a-LAR-19
25 Woods, Xavier	S	5-11	200	7	Louisiana Tech	FA-Min-22	D6-Dal-17

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
10 Hekker, Johnny	P	6-5	225	12	Oregon State	FA-LAR-22	FA-LAR-12
44 Jansen, JJ	LS	6-2	235	16	Notre Dame	T-GB-09	FA-GB-08
4 Piñeiro, Eddy	K	5-11	190	4	Florida	FA-22	FA-LV-18

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	5	Diontae Johnson	88	Terrace Marshall Jr.
WR	15	Jonathan Mingo	17	Xavier Legette (R)
WR	19	Adam Thielen	11	Ihmir Smith-Marsette
LT	79	Ikem Ekwonu	77	Yosh Nijman
LG	68	Damien Lewis	62	Chandler Zavala
C	63	Austin Corbett	70	Brady Christensen
RG	50	Robert Hunt	64	Cade Mays
RT	72	Taylor Moton	77	Yosh Nijman
TE	82	Tommy Tremble	80	Ian Thomas
QB	9	Bryce Young	14	Andy Dalton
RB	30	Chuba Hubbard	6	Miles Sanders

DEFENSE

DE	94	A'Shawn Robinson	92	Raequan Williams
NT	99	Shy Tuttle	93	LaBryan Ray
DE	95	Derrick Brown	91	Nick Thurman
OLB	98	D.J. Wonnum	52	D.J. Johnson
ILB	54	Shaq Thompson	57	Chandler Wooten
ILB	47	Josey Jewell	56	Trevin Wallace (R)
OLB	7	Jadeveon Clowney	45	K'Lavon Chaisson
CB	23	Dane Jackson	13	Troy Hill
CB	8	Jaycee Horn	32	Dicaprio Bootle
SS	25	Xavier Woods	42	Sam Franklin Jr.
FS	20	Jordan Fuller	22	Jammie Robinson

SPECIALISTS

K	4	Eddy Piñeiro	KR 3	Raheem Blackshear
P	10	Johnny Hekker	PR 11	Ihmir Smith-Marsette

5.5

Bryce Young's average yards per attempt last year was 5.5, lowest in the NFL in 2023.

PANTHERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: C+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Xavier Legette	WR	6-3	227	South Carolina
2.	Jonathon Brooks	RB	6-0	207	Texas
3.	Trevin Wallace	LB	6-1	244	Kentucky
4.	Ja'Tavion Sanders	TE	6-4	252	Texas
5.	Chau Smith-Wade	CB	5-11	176	Washington St.
6.	Jaden Crumedy	DT	6-4	309	Mississippi State
7.	Michael Barrett	LB	6-0	239	Michigan

This draft was all about trying to find Bryce Young some more help. Xavier Legette and Ja'Tavion Sanders should make contributions right away. Each is a big target with strong hands, able to make the contested catches the Panthers too often failed on last year. Jonathon Brooks is coming off an ACL tear in November; he was the first RB selected in the entire 2024 draft (46th overall) and hopes to be ready for training camp. Trevin Wallace looks like a potential heir apparent for Shaq Thompson and will contribute on special teams immediately. The final three are all defensive depth picks and will be bottom-of-roster or practice-squad candidates.

NO SAINTS

NFC SOUTH FORECAST

5

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	Carolina	1:00
Sept. 15	at Dallas	1:00
Sept. 22	Philadelphia	1:00
Sept. 29	at Atlanta	1:00
Oct. 7	at Kansas City	8:15
Oct. 13	Tampa Bay	1:00
Oct. 17	Denver	8:15
Oct. 27	at L.A. Chargers	4:05
Nov. 3	at Carolina	1:00
Nov. 10	Atlanta	1:00
Nov. 17	Cleveland	1:00
Nov. 24	BYE	
Dec. 1	L.A. Rams	4:05
Dec. 8	at N.Y. Giants	1:00
Dec. 15	Washington	1:00
Dec. 23	at Green Bay	8:15
Dec. 29	Las Vegas	1:00
Jan. 4/5	at Tampa Bay	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Dennis Allen
Record With Team: 16-18
Career Record: 24-46
Offensive Coordinator: Klint Kubiak
Defensive Coordinator: Joe Woods
Special Teams Coordinator: Darren Rizzi
Quarterbacks: Andrew Janocko
Running Backs: Derrick Foster
Tight Ends: Clancy Barone
Wide Receivers: Keith Williams
Offensive Line: John Benton
Defensive Line: Todd Grantham
Linebackers: Michael Hodges
Secondary: Marcus Robertson

New Orleans considers its organizational stability a source of pride, but after its third consecutive season ended without a playoff berth, this offseason was marked by significant change.

The Saints fired offensive coordinator Pete Carmichael, who had been with the team since 2006, and they ultimately retained only one offensive assistant coach from the 2023 season. They also saw an exodus of veteran players, including wide receiver Michael Thomas, whose star had dimmed considerably after enduring four straight injury-plagued seasons.

The hope is that an injection of new ideas and some younger talent can reverse the Saints' decline since Drew Brees retired following the 2020 season.

That may depend upon whether new offensive coordinator Klint Kubiak can get more out of quarterback Derek Carr, and whether an aging defense can rediscover its old form to quickly turn around some concerning trends.

OFFENSE

The first season of the Carr era in New Orleans did not go as planned. The Saints' year-end offensive numbers — ninth in scoring (23.6 points per game) and 11th in passing (234.7 yards per game) were not truly representative of how punchless they were for long stretches of the season.

Before a torrid late-season stretch, New Orleans had crippling problems in the red zone. A leaky offensive line repeatedly let defenders land big hits on Carr, who exited three separate games with injury. The rushing attack was a complete disaster outside of quarterback Taysom Hill's designed runs, as none of the top three backs (Alvin Kamara, Jamaal Williams and Kendre Miller) managed a run of 20 or more yards in the entire season.

Carr closed the season strong, posting a 14:2 touchdown-to-interception ratio while the Saints went 4-1 in their last five games, but it was not enough to bring the same cast of characters back.

After 18 years with Carmichael running Sean Payton's offense, the Saints finally cut ties and hired Kubiak away from the San Francisco 49ers staff, hoping to steal some of Kyle Shanahan's offensive magic.

While the Saints didn't make any splashy offensive additions, they are hopeful Kubiak can maximize Carr's game by improving the team's rushing attack with the zone-running scheme Kubiak's father, Gary, helped revolutionize, while letting Carr feast on play-action. Carr credited the increased usage of play-action for his late-season surge — he had a 116.7 passer rating on play-action last season but ranked just 13th in play-action pass attempts. Anticipate a big jump in usage this season.

The biggest hurdle to Kubiak's plans may be the offensive line. He added respected coaches John Benton and Rick Dennison to his staff to help sort it out, but it remains a huge question mark — not only because of poor play, but also attrition.

Left tackle Trevor Penning, a 2022 first-rounder, was banished to the bench six games into the season, playing just 14 offensive snaps in the final 11 games. Right tackle Ryan Ramczyk could be forced to medically retire because of a chronic knee injury that has made him a diminished version of his former All-Pro self. Starting left guard James Hurst retired.

New Orleans selected Oregon State tackle Taliese Fuaga 14th overall, which helps, but it remains a largely unproven unit. For a team breaking in a new scheme, that is a terrifying thought.

The Saints do have exciting playmakers. Receiver Chris Olave is coming off his second consecutive 1,000-yard season, and his counterpart, Rashid Shaheed, is an explosive play waiting to happen (15 of his 74 career catches have gone for 30-plus yards). A.T. Perry arrived to the scene late as a rookie but hauled in four touchdowns in his final eight games.

If the new-look Saints are able to figure out the offensive line play — and, by extension, get Kamara back on track — they have potential to be a sneaky-good offense.

DEFENSE

The Saints finished their fourth consecutive season with a top-10 scoring defense, but there are some cracks in the foundation.

Some of the Saints' best defensive qualities from last season will be difficult to maintain. They finished fourth in the NFL in takeaways (29), a notoriously volatile statistic year-to-year. They also finished with their best third-down defense in a dozen years (34.5 percent, fourth overall). In other areas, alarm bells are going off.

The Saints were one of the NFL's least effective teams when it came to getting after the passer, managing just 118 pressures and 34 sacks. Both of those figures ranked in the bottom five among defenses. And after years of possessing one of the league's most stout run defenses, the Saints slid toward the back of the pack in 2023. During one stretch, New Orleans allowed 125 or more rushing yards in six straight games.

Teams that can't impact the quarterback or stop the run don't typically have success. The Saints can't afford a repeat.

New Orleans hopes it addressed the pass-rush problem with free agent Chase Young, the team's one somewhat flashy signing. Young came at a relative discount because of a neck injury that could sideline him for a chunk of training camp, but the Saints felt comfortable gambling on a player who is still just 25 and is coming off a productive campaign as a pass rusher (25 pressures, 7.5 sacks).

The secondary remains the strength of the Saints defense, and the team added to that strength when it drafted Alabama cornerback Kool-Aid McKinstry in the second round. The Saints play an aggressive press-man style, and they've stocked their roster with big, athletic players who fit the mold.

Age is also a concern. The Saints will enter the season with 35-year-old starters at defensive end (Cameron Jordan) and linebacker (Demario Davis), and a 32-year-old starter at safety (Tyrann Mathieu).

Both Mathieu and Davis held up well last year, but Jordan started to fall off. New Orleans can't afford to have all three decline in 2024.

SPECIALISTS

There will be a competition for both specialist spots this summer. Kicker Blake Grupe and punter Lou Hedley both beat out incumbent starters as rookie free agents last season, but both went through challenging seasons. Grupe missed two field goals inside of 30 while connecting on just 81.1 percent of his kicks, and Hedley ranked near the bottom of the NFL in net punting.

New Orleans brought in an intriguing Irish kicker, Charlie Smyth, through the NFL International Player Pathway Program, and it also signed a Ray Guy Award finalist in punter Matthew Hayball after the draft. Any one of those players could win the job.

The Saints are set at returner, however. Shaheed is as dynamic as they come with the ball in his hands, and he earned Pro Bowl and All-Pro honors last season as a return specialist. The NFL's new return rules should only enhance his value there.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The last three seasons have not changed the way the Saints view themselves internally, which is to say they are still convinced they have a playoff-caliber roster.

That could still be true, but there are a lot of ifs: They could make the playoffs if the new scheme gets more out of Carr, if the offensive line rebounds from a terrible year, if the defense's struggles in key areas were a blip in the radar, if they're able to continue to manufacture turnovers and take care of the ball.

Going by the 2023 records, the Saints have one of the weakest schedules for the second straight year, so here's another if: If they are not able to capitalize on that this year, next season we may be talking about a lot more organizational changes.

ANDREW NELLES / TENNESSEAN.COM

2023 RESULTS (9-8)

Sept.	10	Tennessee	W	16-15
Sept.	18	at Carolina	W	20-17
Sept.	24	at Green Bay	L	17-18
Oct.	1	Tampa Bay	L	9-26
Oct.	8	at New England	W	34-0
Oct.	15	at Houston	L	13-20
Oct.	19	Jacksonville	L	24-31
Oct.	29	at Indianapolis	W	38-27
Nov.	5	Chicago	W	24-17
Nov.	12	at Minnesota	L	19-27
Nov.	26	at Atlanta	L	15-24
Dec.	3	Detroit	L	28-33
Dec.	10	Carolina	W	28-6
Dec.	17	N.Y. Giants	W	24-6
Dec.	21	at L.A. Rams	L	22-30
Dec.	31	at Tampa Bay	W	23-13
Jan.	7	Atlanta	W	48-17

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	23.6	14	8
Rushing	102.5	21	12
Passing	234.7	11	6
Scoring	23.6	9	6
Third Down %	38.7	15	11
Points/Play	0.359	13	8

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	327.2	13	6
Rushing	119.9	22	10
Passing	207.3	10	5
Scoring	19.2	8	4
Interceptions	18	T3	T3
Sacks	34	T28	T12
Opp. Pts./Play	0.310	6	3
TO Differential	+11	T3	2

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Derek Carr	548	375	3,878	25	8
Jameis Winston	47	25	264	2	3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Alvin Kamara	180	694	3.9	5
Taysom Hill	81	401	5.0	4
Jamaal Williams	106	306	2.9	1
Kendre Miller	41	156	3.8	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Chris Olave	87	1,123	12.9	5
Alvin Kamara	75	466	6.2	1
Rashid Shaheed	46	719	15.6	5
Michael Thomas	39	448	11.5	1
Juwan Johnson	37	368	9.9	4
Taysom Hill	33	291	8.8	2

KICKING: Blake Grupe, 30-37 FGs, 40-40 PATs, 130 points
TACKLES: Demario Davis, 121; Pete Werner, 93
SACKS: Carl Granderson, 8.5; Demario Davis, 6.5
INTERCEPTIONS: Paulson Adebo, 4; Tyrann Mathieu, 4

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

BIG BOYS EATING New Orleans is one of the world's great food cities, and the Saints' weekly offensive line dinners are the stuff of legend. Pro Bowl center **Erik McCoy** is the ringleader, and predictably, a dozen or so 300-pounders with flush bank accounts go crazy: "It's every fat kid's dream to sit down and eat with us," offensive tackle Landon Young says. "There's times when we sit down there and talk and say, 'We're glad our wives are not here, because they would be disgusted.'"

INTERNATIONAL FLAVOR The Saints had an interesting group of specialists in their locker room this summer. Of the four kickers and punters on their roster, only one (Blake Grupe) hailed from the United States. Irish kicker Charlie Smyth has never played a down of organized football (at least not American football), and punters Lou Hedley and Matthew Hayball both hail from Australia, where they grew up playing Aussie rules football.

ACE UP THEIR SLEEVE? The Saints routinely rank near the top of the league in Rick Gosselin's annual special teams rankings (last year: No. 2), and that has in large part been because of highly regarded special teams coach Darren Rizzi. This spring was a busy one for Rizzi, as he was one of the key figures in getting the NFL to change its kickoff rule. He will surely have a good plan for how to best take advantage of that.

STATISTICAL ODDITY Since the 1970 AFL/NFL merger, only two NFL teams have ever finished a season with at least a plus-75 scoring margin and a plus-11 turnover margin and still lost eight games: the 2022 Indianapolis Colts and the 2023 Saints. Like those 2022 Colts, most of the Saints' eight losses came by one score (eight or fewer points).

SCOUTING THE SAINTS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP NEW ORLEANS "Derek Carr's play is so up-and-down that the Saints have to start thinking about what they have in Spencer Rattler. That's a long-term play for a coaching staff that's under heavy evaluation. If ownership makes a change after this season, I doubt it comes in personnel. General manager Mickey Loomis is in good standing. Head coach Dennis Allen is under review. They've got to win more. … Alvin Kamara hasn't stopped being one of the most versatile backs in the game. … Chris Olave dominates these nickel corners. They can't stop him in the slot. … Juwan Johnson is below the radar, but he's a really good tight end. …. Trevor Penning is a brawler at the line of scrimmage. … The Ryan Ramczyk health situation prompted them to draft Taliese Fuaga. I see him being an upgrade very soon. … Demario Davis' play belies his age. He hasn't slowed down a bit. … Chase Young may need a lot of time before he's 100 percent healthy. … Pete Werner keeps finding the football and making plays. … Tyrann Mathieu has declined as a player. … Marshon Lattimore is constantly in trade rumors. Maybe one of these days they'll actually trade him. … Kool-Aid McKinstry looks like a plug-and-play type at corner."

ERIC HARTLINE-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 SAINTS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4 Carr, Derek	QB	6-3	215	10	Fresno State	FA-LV-23	D2-LV-14
3 Haener, Jake	QB	6-1	200	1	Fresno State	D4b-23	D4b-NO-23
7 Hill, Taysom	QB	6-2	221	7	BYU	W-GB-17	FA-GB-17
10 Peterman, Nathan	QB	6-2	225	7	Pittsburgh	FA-Chi-24	D5-Buf-17

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
40 Horvath, Zander	FB	6-3	240	1	Purdue	FA-24	D7b-LAC-22
41 Kamara, Alvin	RB	5-10	215	7	Tennessee	D3a-17	D3a-NO-17
25 Miller, Kendre	RB	6-0	220	1	TCU	D3-23	D3-NO-23
33 Mims, Jordan	RB	6-0	205	1	Fresno State	FA-23	FA-Buf-23
46 Prentice, Adam	FB	6-0	245	3	South Carolina	W-Den-21	FA-Den-21
26 Robinson, James	RB	5-9	219	4	Illinois State	FA-23	FA-Jac-20
21 Williams, Jamaal	RB	6-0	224	7	BYU	FA-Det-23	D4b-GB-17

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
89 Hudson, Tommy	TE	6-5	255	2	Arizona State	FA-23	FA-Ten-20
86 Jacobson, Michael	TE	6-7	244	1	Iowa State	FA-23	FA-Sea-21
83 Johnson, Juwan	TE	6-4	231	4	Oregon	FA-20	FA-NO-20
85 Kirklin, Jontre	WR	6-0	184	1	LSU	FA-23	FA-Ari-22
87 Moreau, Foster	TE	6-4	250	5	LSU	FA-23	D4c-LV-19
14 Morgan, Stanley	WR	6-0	205	5	Nebraska	FA-24	FA-Cin-19
12 Olave, Chris	WR	6-0	187	2	Ohio State	D1a-22	D1a-NO-22
17 Perry, A.T.	WR	6-5	205	1	Wake Forest	D6-23	D6-NO-23
22 Shaheed, Rashid	WR	6-0	180	2	Weber State	FA-22	FA-NO-22
13 St. Brown, Equanimeous	WR	6-5	214	6	Notre Dame	FA-Chi-24	D6-GB-18
11 Wilson Jr., Cedrick	WR	6-2	197	6	Boise State	FA-Mia-24	D6b-Dal-18

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
68 Evans II, Mark	OL	6-4	295	1	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	FA-23	FA-NO-23
77 Herron, Justin	T	6-5	305	4	Wake Forest	FA-24	D6b-NE-20
66 Lemieux, Shane	G	6-4	310	4	Oregon	FA-NYG-24	D5-NYG-20
78 McCoy, Erik	C/G	6-4	303	5	Texas A&M	D2-19	D2-NO-19
Patrick, Lucas	OL	6-3	313	7	Duke	FA-Chi-24	FA-GB-16
70 Penning, Trevor	T	6-7	325	2	Northern Iowa	D1b-22	D1b-NO-22
71 Ramczyk, Ryan	T	6-6	314	7	Wisconsin	D1b-17	D1b-NO-17
51 Ruiz, Cesar	C/G	6-4	316	4	Michigan	D1-20	D1-NO-20
64 Saldiveri, Nick	OL	6-6	316	1	Old Dominion	D4a-23	D4a-NO-23
74 Udoh, Olisaemeka	T	6-6	320	5	Elon	FA-Min-24	D6c-Min-19
67 Young, Landon	T	6-7	321	3	Kentucky	D6-21	D6-NO-21

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
90 Bresee, Bryan	DT	6-5	305	1	Clemson	D1-23	D1-NO-23
55 Foskey, Isaiah	DE	6-5	265	1	Notre Dame	D2-23	D2-NO-23
96 Granderson, Carl	DE	6-5	261	5	Wyoming	FA-19	FA-NO-19
95 Heflin, Jack	DT	6-3	304	2	Iowa	FA-23	FA-GB-21
94 Jordan, Cameron	DE	6-4	287	13	California	D1a-11	D1a-NO-11
92 Kpassagnon, Tanoh	DE	6-7	289	7	Villanova	FA-KC-21	D2-KC-17
57 Lalos, Niko	DE	6-5	269	2	Dartmouth	FA-23	FA-NYG-20
50 Saunders, Khalen	DT	6-0	324	5	Western Illinois	FA-KC-23	D3-KC-19
93 Shepherd, Nathan	DT	6-4	315	6	Fort Hays State	FA-NYJ-23	D3-NYJ-18
98 Turner, Payton	DE	6-6	270	3	Houston	D1-21	D1-NO-21
Vickers, Kendal	DL	6-3	295	4	Tennessee	FA-24	FA-Pit-18
99 Young, Chase	DE	6-5	265	4	Ohio State	FA-SF-24	D1-Was-20

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
43 Connelly, Ryan	LB	6-2	234	4	Wisconsin	FA-23	D5-NYG-19
56 Davis, Demario	LB	6-2	248	12	Arkansas State	FA-NYJ-18	D3-NYJ-12
6 Gay, Willie	LB	6-1	243	4	Mississippi State	FA-KC-24	D2-KC-20
47 Hudson, Khaleke	LB	6-0	220	4	Michigan	FA-Was-24	D5b-Was-20
52 Jackson, D'Marco	LB	6'1	233	2	App State	D5-22	D5-NO-22
58 Orji, Anfernee	LB	6-2	230	1	Vanderbilt	FA-23	FA-NO-23
59 Rice, Monty	LB	6-0	233	3	Georgia	W-Ten-23	D3a-Ten-21
45 Sewell, Nephi	LB	6-0	228	1	Utah	FA-22	FA-NO-22
20 Werner, Pete	LB	6-3	242	3	Ohio State	D2-21	D2-NO-21

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
24 Abram, Johnathan	S	6-0	205	5	Mississippi State	FA-Sea-23	D1c-LV-19
29 Adebo, Paulson	CB	6-1	192	3	Stanford	D3-21	D3-NO-21
0 Amadi, Ugo	S	5-9	201	5	Oregon	FA-KC-23	D4-Sea-19
11 Dantzler Sr., Cameron	DB	6-2	188	4	Mississippi State	FA-23	D3-Min-20
48 Gray, J.T.	DB	6-0	202	6	Mississippi State	FA-18	FA-NO-18
5 Harris, Will	CB	6-1	206	5	Boston College	FA-Det-24	D3-Det-19
30 Hicks, Faion	DB	5-10	192	1	Wisconsin	FA-23	D7-Den-22
31 Howden, Jordan	DB	6-0	209	1	Minnesota	D5-23	D5-NO-23
38 Jean-Charles, Shemar	DB	5-10	184	3	App State	FA-23	D5-GB-21
23 Lattimore, Marshon	CB	6-0	192	7	Ohio State	D1a-17	D1a-NO-17
32 Mathieu, Tyrann	S	5-9	190	11	LSU	FA-KC-22	D3-Ari-13
1 Taylor, Alontae	CB	6-1	199	2	Tennessee	D2-22	D2-NO-22
28 Wright, Rejzohn	CB	6-2	200	1	Oregon State	FA-24	FA-Car-23

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
19 Grupe, Blake	K	5-7	156	1	Notre Dame	FA-23	FA-NO-23
15 Hedley, Lou	P	6-4	220	1	Miami	FA-23	FA-NO-23
39 Smyth, Charlie	K	6-4	210	1	Belfast	FA-24	FA-NO-24
49 Wood, Zach	LS	6-3	255	7	SMU	FA-17	FA-Dal-16

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	12	Chris Olave	13	Equanimeous St. Brown
WR	22	Rashid Shaheed	11	Cedrick Wilson Jr.
WR	17	A.T. Perry	16	Bub Means (R)
LT	75	Taliese Fuaga (R)	70	Trevor Penning
LG	74	Olisaemeka Udoh	64	Nick Saldiveri
C	78	Erik McCoy	51	Cesar Ruiz
RG	51	Cesar Ruiz	64	Nick Saldiveri
RT	71	Ryan Ramczyk	67	Landon Young
TE	83	Juwan Johnson	87	Foster Moreau
QB	4	Derek Carr	3	Jake Haener
RB	41	Alvin Kamara	21	Jamaal Williams

DEFENSE

DE	94	Cameron Jordan	98	Payton Turner
DT	50	Khalen Saunders	97	Khristian Boyd (R)
DT	90	Bryan Bresee	93	Nathan Shepherd
DE	99	Chase Young	96	Carl Granderson
LB	56	Demario Davis	53	Jaylan Ford (R)
LB	20	Pete Werner	6	Willie Gay
CB	23	Marshon Lattimore	34	Kool-Aid McKinstry (R)
CB	29	Paulson Adebo	34	Kool-Aid McKinstry (R)
NB	1	Alontae Taylor	0	Ugo Amadi
S	31	Jordan Howden	24	Johnathan Abram
S	32	Tyrann Mathieu	0	Ugo Amadi

SPECIALISTS

K	19	Blake Grupe	KR	22	Rashid Shaheed
P	15	Lou Hedley	PR	22	Rashid Shaheed

34

The Saints finished with just 34 sacks as a defense, fourth fewest in the league and the first time under head coach Dennis Allen the defense ranked in the bottom five.

SAINTS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Taliese Fuaga	OT	6-6	324	Oregon State
2.	Kool-Aid McKinstry	CB	5-11	199	Alabama
5.	Spencer Rattler	QB	6-0	211	South Carolina
5.	Bub Means	WR	6-2	215	Pittsburgh
5.	Jaylan Ford	LB	6-2	240	Texas
6.	Khristian Boyd	DT	6-2	325	Northern Iowa
7.	Josiah Ezirim	OT	6-6	320	Eastern Kentucky

The Saints addressed their greatest need with easily the best tackle available in Taliese Fuaga, who went 14th overall and should step into the starting lineup right away. For the rest of the draft, they went for positional value and high-upside swings on Day 3 prospects. They traded up to get Kool-Aid McKinstry at a position of strength because they know from experience a team can never have enough quality depth at corner. They stopped Spencer Rattler's skid in the fifth round and believe he has starting potential, which could turn him into a huge value. Bub Means, Jaylan Ford and Khristian Boyd all have paths to the field as role players.

BUCCANEERS

NFC SOUTH FORECAST

1

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	Washington	4:25
Sept. 15	at Detroit	1:00
Sept. 22	Denver	1:00
Sept. 29	Philadelphia	1:00
Oct. 3	at Atlanta	8:15
Oct. 13	at New Orleans	1:00
Oct. 21	Baltimore	8:15
Oct. 27	Atlanta	1:00
Nov. 4	at Kansas City	8:15
Nov. 10	San Francisco	1:00
Nov. 17	BYE	
Nov. 24	at N.Y. Giants	1:00
Dec. 1	at Carolina	4:05
Dec. 8	Las Vegas	1:00
Dec. 15	at L.A. Chargers	4:25
Dec. 22	at Dallas	8:20
Dec. 29	Carolina	1:00
Jan. 4/5	New Orleans	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Todd Bowles
Record With Team: 17-17
Career Record: 43-58
Offensive Coordinator: Liam Coen
Defensive Coordinator: Todd Bowles
Special Teams Coordinator: Thomas McGaughey
Quarterbacks: Thaddeus Lewis
Running Backs: Skip Peete
Wide Receivers: Bryan McClendon
Offensive Line: Kevin Carberry
Run Game Coordinator/Defensive Line: Kacy Rodgers
Passing Game Coordinator/Inside Linebackers: Larry Foote
Outside Linebackers: George Edwards
Cornerbacks: Kevin Ross
Safeties: Nick Rapone

Last year, following Tom Brady's second (and final) retirement, most national outlets projected the Bucs to be among the worst teams in the NFL. Instead, they won the NFC South for the third straight year, made a fourth consecutive trip to the playoffs and came within eight points of a trip to the NFC title game.

The Bucs are the only team in the NFC to win its division in each of the past three seasons, and they are primed to keep that streak going after retaining virtually all of their key free agents (wide receiver Mike Evans, quarterback Baker Mayfield, linebacker Lavonte David, safety Antoine Winfield Jr. and kicker Chase McLaughlin). The coaching staff and front office have navigated the transition between eras effectively, with a more successful season last year than they had with Brady in 2022, and head coach Todd Bowles has everything he needs to make the postseason for a third straight year since taking the reins from Bruce Arians.

OFFENSE

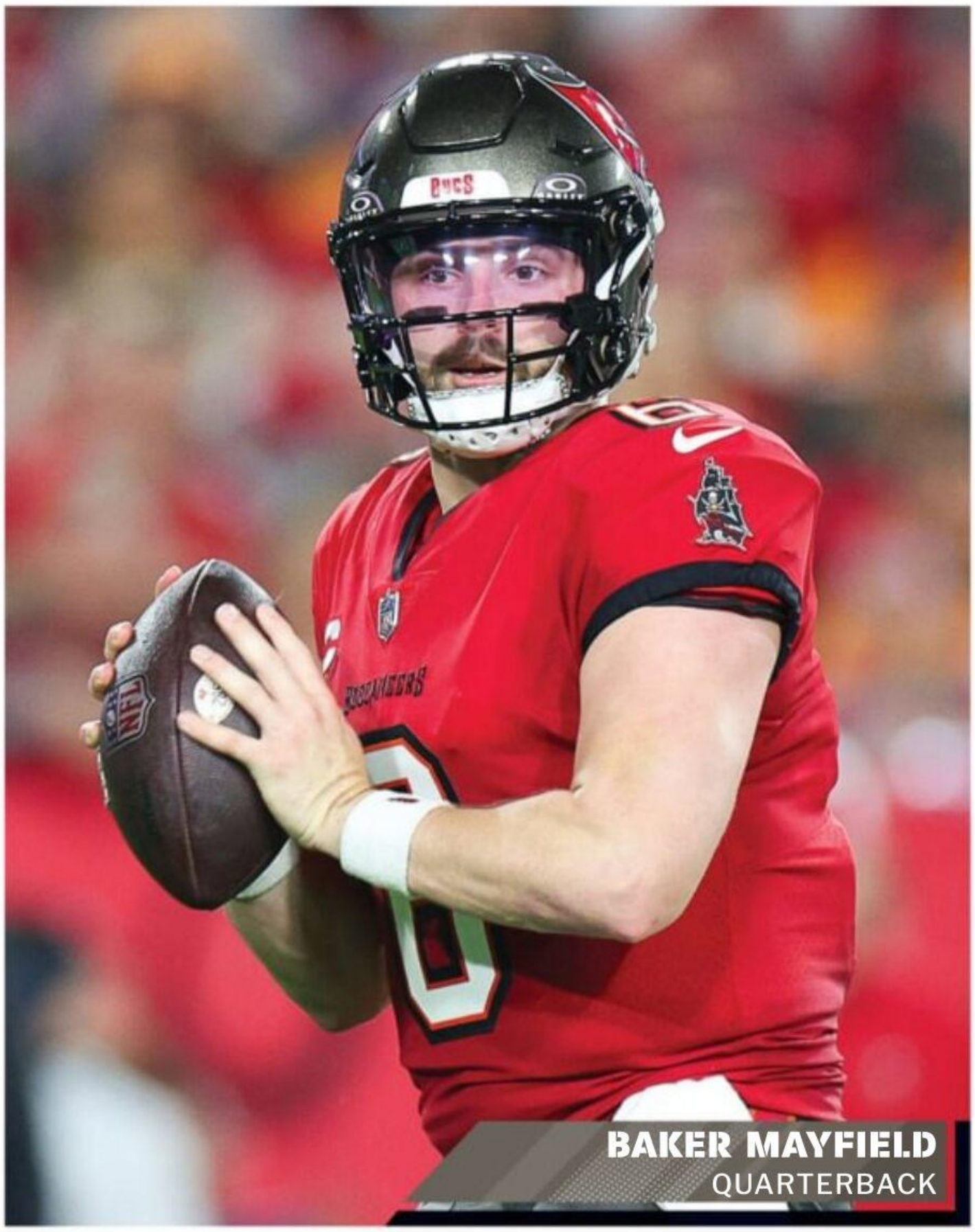
Mayfield returns on a new three-year contract, and while he'll have to break in a new offensive coordinator yet again, he's got history with Liam Coen from their brief time together with the Los Angeles Rams. Both will have the benefit of Evans and fellow wide receiver Chris Godwin, who will once again provide one of the NFL's best pass-catching tandems. Trey Palmer flashed big-play ability last season with his game-breaking speed, but consistency will be key to his continued development and improvement after a promising rookie campaign. He'll be pushed by rookie third-round pick Jalen McMillan, who could have been a much earlier selection if not for a knee injury that limited his production at Washington last season. Cade Otton returns as the top option at tight end, with familiar depth in Payne Durham and fullback-hybrid Ko Kieft. Seventh-round rookie Devin Culp could see some snaps due to his elite speed for the position.

Improving the ground game will remain a priority, though Rachaad White is coming off a strong sophomore campaign that saw him lead the NFL in offensive snaps by a running back, with more than 1,500 yards from scrimmage and nine touchdowns as one of the league's best dual-threat backs. Rookie fourth-round pick Bucky Irving should beat out returning veteran Chase Edmonds for the RB2 role behind White, and improved play up front should be the key to making Tampa Bay a much more efficient rushing team in 2024.

All-Pro tackle Tristan Wirfs' transition from the right side to the left was seamless last season, and he remains the gold standard at the position as the leader of Tampa Bay's offensive line. First-round pick Graham Barton should supplant incumbent Robert Hainsey as the starting center, and while right guard Cody Mauch and right tackle Luke Goedeke showed marked improvement throughout the 2023 season, the competition for the starting left guard spot will be wide open throughout training camp and the preseason. New free-agent acquisitions Sua Opeta and Ben Bredeson are likely to battle with Hainsey and rookie sixth-round pick Elijah Klein for that last starting spot in the offensive trenches.

DEFENSE

This unit heads into its sixth season with defensive coordinator-turned-head coach Bowles at the helm, and most of the core pieces are back. David and Winfield are among the league's best at their respective positions, as is nose tackle Vita Vea, giving the Bucs a blue-chip anchor at every level of the defense.



NATHAN RAY SEEBECK-USA TODAY SPORTS

Calijah Kancey overcame an injury-induced late start to finish his rookie season strong, and he should be even better in 2024 as the lightning to Vea's thunder along Tampa Bay's defensive front. Franchise stalwart William Gholston is back to provide defensive line depth and perhaps push Logan Hall, the team's top draft pick in 2022, to finally prove he can be a reliable starter.

Tampa Bay is still waiting for a similar breakout from 2021 first-round outside linebacker Joe Tryon-Shoyinka, having declined to pick up the fifth-year option on his rookie contract. The Bucs spent a second-round pick on Chris Braswell, who could leapfrog Tryon-Shoyinka on the depth chart and end up starting opposite Yaya Diaby, who was a rookie revelation as a third-round pick last season (7.5 sacks). Randy Gregory was signed to a one-year deal in free agency to replace the veteran experience that departed with Shaq Barrett, who was released to save salary cap space this offseason.

Cornerback Jamel Dean returns as Tampa Bay's top cover man on the outside, and safety Jordan Whitehead is back after spending two seasons with the Jets, giving the Bucs a familiar face and hard-hitting playmaker who already has tons of experience in Bowles' defense. All-Pro Winfield became the highest-paid defensive back in NFL history, signing a four-year, $84.1 million deal, and he'll continue his big-play ways all over the field this season and beyond.

The competition at nickel corner will be a tight one between incumbent Christian Izien (a gem of an undrafted free-agent find last year), a talented third-round pick in Tykee Smith and a new free-agent addition in Tavierre Thomas.

There are a handful of question marks throughout this unit, as multiple holes in the starting lineup were created by offseason departures. Linebacker Devin White was allowed to walk in free agency, and the Bucs didn't make any significant outside additions in return, leaving a young group of challengers (SirVocea Dennis, K.J. Britt, J.J. Russell) to compete for his spot opposite David. Cornerback Carlton Davis III was traded to the Detroit Lions in a deal that netted Tampa Bay a third-round pick in this year's draft, but that also leaves them with a hole they're hoping can be filled by an improving young talent (Zyon McCollum) or an underrated free-agent signing (Bryce Hall).

SPECIALISTS

Kicker Chase McLaughlin and punter Jake Camarda are both coming off the best seasons in franchise history at their respective positions, putting up record-setting numbers for Tampa Bay in 2023. Camarda has proven to be well worth the fourth-round pick that secured him two years ago, while McLaughlin was rewarded this offseason with a new three-year contract extension. Zach Triner also got a new one-year deal to return, so he'll handle the long-snapping duties for a sixth straight season. Look for Irving and wide receiver Deven Thompkins to be the front-runners for return duties in 2024.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The prime objective for the Bucs this offseason was to keep a good thing going, and for the most part, the band is back together. If the defense can adequately fill the holes left by departing starters and get continued improvement from multiple young players, that unit should still be a tough out for any offense with Bowles at the helm. Mayfield is coming off a career year, but now the expectations will be much higher for him to maintain that level of play now that he's gotten paid accordingly. His familiarity with Coen and the continuity of his supporting cast should put him in position to live up to the bar he reset for himself with a stellar 2023 campaign. The Bucs should still be the favorites to win the NFC South for a fourth straight season, barring any major injuries to key players.

TB

2023 RESULTS (9-8)

Sept.	10	at Minnesota	W	20-17
Sept.	17	Chicago	W	27-17
Sept.	25	Philadelphia	L	11-25
Oct.	1	at New Orleans	W	26-9
Oct.	15	Detroit	L	6-20
Oct.	22	Atlanta	L	13-16
Oct.	26	at Buffalo	L	18-24
Nov.	5	at Houston	L	37-39
Nov.	12	Tennessee	W	20-6
Nov.	19	at San Francisco	L	14-27
Nov.	26	at Indianapolis	L	20-27
Dec.	3	Carolina	W	21-18
Dec.	10	at Atlanta	W	29-25
Dec.	17	at Green Bay	W	34-20
Dec.	24	Jacksonville	W	30-12
Dec.	31	New Orleans	L	13-23
Jan.	7	at Carolina	W	9-0
Postseason				
Jan.	15	Philadelphia	W	32-9
Jan.	21	Detroit	L	23-31

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	313.0	23	13
Rushing	88.8	32	16
Passing	224.2	17	10
Scoring	20.5	20	10
Third Down %	41.5	10	5
Points/Play	0.343	17	9

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	344.2	23	11
Rushing	95.3	5	4
Passing	248.9	29	14
Scoring	19.1	7	3
Interceptions	13	T17	7
Sacks	48	T7	2
Opp. Pts./Play	0.303	4	2
TO Differential	+8	9	5

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Baker Mayfield	566	364	4,044	28	10

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Rachaad White	272	990	3.6	6
Chase Edmonds	49	176	3.6	0
Baker Mayfield	62	163	2.6	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Chris Godwin	83	1,024	12.3	2
Mike Evans	79	1,255	15.9	13
Rachaad White	64	549	8.6	3
Cade Otton	47	455	9.7	4
Trey Palmer	39	385	9.9	3

KICKING: Chase McLaughlin, 29-31 FGs, 33-33 PATs, 120 points
TACKLES: Lavonte David, 134; Antoine Winfield Jr., 122
SACKS: YaYa Diaby, 7.5; Antoine Winfield Jr., 6.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Antoine Winfield Jr., 3; four tied with 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

SEE YOU IN CANTON Back with Tampa Bay on a new two-year contract, **Mike Evans** will continue strengthening his case for the Hall of Fame in 2024. He already holds the NFL record by starting his career with 10 straight 1,000-yard seasons, and he needs just six more touchdown receptions to be one of only 11 players in league history with 100 or more in a career.

BUILDING THROUGH THE TRENCHES The Bucs know that success starts up front. "I know the whole world is caught up in fantasy (football) now, and receivers this, and running backs this; I think offensive linemen are sexy as hell," Bucs assistant GM John Spytek said after Day 2 of this year's draft. "I think Todd (Bowles) made a great point earlier: If you don't draft and develop offensive linemen, you're never gonna get good offensive linemen. Teams don't let good offensive linemen get out of their building."

DAD LIFE Already close friends after playing just one season together, Baker Mayfield and Tristan Wirfs were able to share another bond this offseason. Wirfs and his girlfriend, Meredith Sutton, welcomed a baby boy in early April. Just a couple of weeks later, Mayfield's wife, Emily gave birth to a daughter. Instead of just late-night film sessions and playbook study time, it'll be bottle feedings and diaper changes for Mayfield and Wirfs this offseason.

MR. UNDERRATED Lavonte David is used to flying under the radar. While fellow linebackers from the 2021 NFL draft Luke Kuechly and Bobby Wagner racked up Pro Bowls and All-Pro honors while playing for perennial contenders for most of their careers, David quietly put up better numbers throughout his career. Now heading into his 13th season in Tampa Bay, David leads the NFL in tackles since he entered the league. He also ranks third among active players in forced fumbles; he's the only player in the top 10 who isn't primarily a pass rusher.

SCOUTING THE BUCCANEERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP TAMPA BAY "Baker Mayfield answered a lot of questions and got the last word over the critics. He really showed me something. Lot of moxie, lot more discipline, lot less emotional on the field. He was a strong fit for Tampa Bay. … Rachaad White is not a household name, but he's a really good running back. … Mike Evans was never going anywhere. It made too much sense for him to re-sign with Tampa Bay. He's built a true Hall of Fame résumé with them as a career Buc. … Graham Barton has a reputation as one of the most NFL-ready rookies in the draft. … Not a bad offensive line. Having Tristan Wirfs at left tackle gives them a real clean pocket. … Team officials want to see Vita Vea become more consistent. He's good enough to dominate, but he doesn't always play to that level. … Lavonte David is the constant. He keeps making play after play. … They didn't pick up the fifth-year option for Joe Tryon-Shoyinka. It's so expensive. … Antoine Winfield Jr. is so good. He's a true ballhawk, and he plays the game with an edge. … Logan Hall has a lot of tools working in his favor. … Todd Bowles is a solid, no-nonsense coach, just like when he was playing safety in the NFL."

JEREMY REPER-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 BUCCANEERS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
6 Mayfield, Baker	QB	6-1	215	6	Oklahoma	FA-LAR-23	D1a-Cle-18
2 Trask, Kyle	QB	6-5	236	3	Florida	D2-21	D2-TB-21
11 Wolford, John	QB	6-1	218	4	Wake Forest	FA-LAR-23	FA-LAR-19

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
22 Edmonds, Chase	RB	5-9	201	6	Fordham	FA-Den-23	D4-Ari-18
25 Laird, Patrick	RB	6-1	205	4	California	FA-22	FA-Mia-19
44 Tucker, Sean	RB	5-10	205	1	Syracuse	FA-23	FA-TB-23
1 White, Rachaad	RB	6-0	214	2	Arizona State	D3-22	D3-TB-22

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
87 Durham, Payne	TE	6-5	255	1	Purdue	D5b-23	D5b-TB-23
13 Evans, Mike	WR	6-5	231	10	Texas A&M	D1-14	D1-TB-14
14 Godwin, Chris	WR	6-1	209	7	Penn State	D3a-17	D3a-TB-17
18 Jarrett, Rakim	WR	6-0	192	1	Maryland	FA-23	FA-TB-23
28 Johnson III, Cephus	WR	6-5	220	1	SE Louisiana	FA-23	FA-Min-23
41 Kieft, Ko	TE	6-5	265	2	Minnesota	D6-22	D6-TB-22
81 Miller, Ryan	WR	6-2	221	1	Furman	FA-23	FA-TB-23
88 Otton, Cade	TE	6-5	247	2	Washington	D4a-22	D4a-TB-22
10 Palmer, Trey	WR	6-1	190	1	Nebraska	D6b-23	D6b-TB-23
84 Taula, Tanner	TE	6-6	255	1	Illinois State	FA-23	FA-TB-23
83 Thompkins, Deven	WR	5-8	155	2	Utah State	FA-22	FA-TB-22
17 Webb, Raleigh	WR	6-2	212	2	The Citadel	FA-23	FA-Bal-22

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
68 Bredeson, Ben	G	6-5	310	4	Michigan	FA-NYG-24	D4-Bal-20
61 Dzansi, Silas	T	6-5	335	1	Virginia Tech	FA-23	FA-TB-23
67 Goedeke, Luke	T	6-5	312	2	Central Michigan	D2b-22	D2b-TB-22
72 Haggard, Luke	OL	6-7	305	1	Indiana	FA-23	FA-TB-23
70 Hainsey, Robert	C	6-4	306	3	Notre Dame	D3-21	D3-TB-21
69 Mauch, Cody	G	6-6	303	1	North Dakota State	D2-23	D2-TB-23
71 Metz, Lorenz	OL	6-9	310	1	Cincinnati	FA-24	FA-Chi-23
76 Opeta, Sua	G	6-4	305	4	Weber State	FA-Phi-24	FA-Phi-19
77 Skule, Justin	T	6-6	315	4	Vanderbilt	FA-22	D6b-SF-19
74 Stenberg, Logan	OL	6-6	315	4	Kentucky	FA-23	D4-Det-20
73 Walton, Brandon	OL	6-5	300	2	Florida Atlantic	W-Pit-21	FA-Buf-20
78 Wirfs, Tristan	T	6-5	320	4	Iowa	D1-20	D1-TB-20

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
93 Banks, Eric	DL	6-5	289	3	UTSA	FA-24	FA-LAR-20
95 Brewer, C.J.	DL	6-2	290	1	Coastal Carolina	FA-23	FA-Buf-22
96 Gaines, Greg	DL	6-1	312	5	Washington	FA-LAR-23	D4-LAR-19
92 Gholston, William	DL	6-6	281	11	Michigan State	D4b-13	D4b-TB-13
91 Greene, Mike	DL	6-3	293	1	James Madison	FA-22	FA-TB-22
90 Hall, Logan	DL	6-6	283	2	Houston	D2a-22	D2a-TB-22
94 Kancey, Calijah	DL	6-0	280	1	Pittsburgh	D1-23	D1-TB-23
75 Uguak, Lwal	DL	6-5	271	1	TCU	FA-24	FA-TB-24
50 Vea, Vita	NT	6-4	347	6	Washington	D1-18	D1-TB-18

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
52 Britt, K.J.	LB	6-0	235	3	Auburn	D5-21	D5-TB-21
54 David, Lavonte	LB	6-1	233	12	Nebraska	D2-12	D2-TB-12
8 Dennis, SirVocea	LB	6-1	230	1	Pittsburgh	D5a-23	D5a-TB-23
0 Diaby, Yaya	OLB	6-4	270	1	Louisville	D3-23	D3-TB-23
56 Gregory, Randy	OLB	6-5	242	7	Nebraska	FA-SF-24	D2-Dal-15
53 Jones, Vi	LB	6-2	225	1	NC State	FA-24	FA-Sea-22
98 Nelson, Anthony	OLB	6-7	271	5	Iowa	D4-19	D4-TB-19
33 Ramirez, Jose	OLB	6-2	252	1	Eastern Michigan	D6c-23	D6c-TB-23
51 Russell, J.J.	LB	6-1	225	2	Memphis	FA-22	FA-TB-22
9 Tryon-Shoyinka, Joe	OLB	6-5	259	3	Washington	D1-21	D1-TB-21
58 Watts, Markees	OLB	6-1	240	1	Charlotte	FA-23	FA-TB-23

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
35 Dean, Jamel	CB	6-1	206	5	Auburn	D3a-19	D3a-TB-19
21 Hall, Bryce	CB	6-1	202	4	Virginia	FA-NYJ-24	D5-NYJ-20
32 Hayes, Josh	DB	6-0	190	1	Kansas State	D6a-23	D6a-TB-23
16 Isaac, Keenan	CB	6-3	190	1	Alabama State	FA-23	FA-TB-23
29 Izien, Christian	S	5-10	200	1	Rutgers	FA-23	FA-TB-23
27 McCollum, Zyon	CB	6-2	199	2	Sam Houston	D5-22	D5-TB-22
26 Merriweather, Kaevon	S	6-0	212	1	Iowa	FA-23	FA-TB-23
34 Mosely, Quandre	CB	6-2	195	1	Kentucky	FA-23	FA-Dal-22
37 Thomas, Tavierre	CB	5-10	205	6	Ferris State	FA-Hou-24	FA-Ari-18
3 Whitehead, Jordan	S	5-10	198	6	Pittsburgh	FA-NYJ-24	D4-TB-18
31 Winfield Jr., Antoine	S	5-9	203	4	Minnesota	D2-20	D2-TB-20

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
5 Camarda, Jake	P	6-1	193	2	Georgia	D4b-22	D4b-TB-22
86 Deckers, Evan	LS	6-4	244	1	Duke	FA-24	FA-TB-23
4 McLaughlin, Chase	K	6-0	190	5	Illinois	FA-Ind-23	FA-Buf-19
97 Triner, Zach	LS	6-3	245	5	Assumption	FA-19	FA-NYJ-17

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	13	Mike Evans	15	Jalen McMillan (R)
WR	14	Chris Godwin	83	Deven Thompkins
WR	10	Trey Palmer	18	Rakim Jarrett
LT	78	Tristan Wirfs	73	Brandon Walton
LG	76	Sua Opeta	68	Ben Bredeson
C	62	Graham Barton (R)	70	Robert Hainsey
RG	69	Cody Mauch	79	Elijah Klein (R)
RT	67	Luke Goedeke	77	Justin Skule
TE	88	Cade Otton	87	Payne Durham
QB	6	Baker Mayfield	2	Kyle Trask
RB	1	Rachaad White	7	Bucky Irving (R)

DEFENSE

DL	94	Calijah Kancey	91	Mike Greene
DL	50	Vita Vea	96	Greg Gaines
DL	90	Logan Hall	92	William Gholston
OLB	0	Yaya Diaby	56	Randy Gregory
ILB	54	Lavonte David	51	J.J. Russell
ILB	8	SirVocea Dennis	52	K.J. Britt
OLB	9	Joe Tryon-Shoyinka	43	Chris Braswell (R)
CB	35	Jamel Dean	21	Bryce Hall
CB	27	Zyon McCollum	21	Bryce Hall
NB	23	Tykee Smith (R)	29	Christian Izien
SS	3	Jordan Whitehead	23	Tykee Smith (R)
FS	31	Antoine Winfield Jr.	32	Josh Hayes

SPECIALISTS

K	4	Chase McLaughlin	KR	83	Deven Thompkins
P	5	Jake Camarda	PR	83	Deven Thompkins

6.3

Tampa's net yards per attempt went up from 5.9 in 2022 to 6.3 in 2023 after the quarterback switch from Tom Brady to Baker Mayfield.

BUCS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Graham Barton	OL	6-5	314	Duke
2.	Chris Braswell	OLB	6-3	255	Alabama
3.	Tykee Smith	DB	5-10	205	Georgia
3.	Jalen McMillan	WR	6-1	192	Washington
4.	Bucky Irving	RB	5-10	195	Oregon
6.	Elijah Klein	OG	6-4	319	UTEP
7.	Devin Culp	TE	6-4	237	Washington

Graham Barton was a steal at No. 26 overall, with five-position versatility up front. He should start at center right away. Chris Braswell could quickly supplant 2021 first-rounder Joe Tryon-Shoyinka in the starting lineup. Tykee Smith should make an immediate impact as both a slot corner and safety, while Jalen McMillan should challenge Trey Palmer for WR3 reps right away. Quicker than fast and tough to tackle, Bucky Irving should be the new change-of-pace back to spell Rachaad White. Elijah Klein is the rare late-rounder who could take control of an open competition at left guard, and Devin Culp's speed alone should earn him a roster spot.

CARDINALS

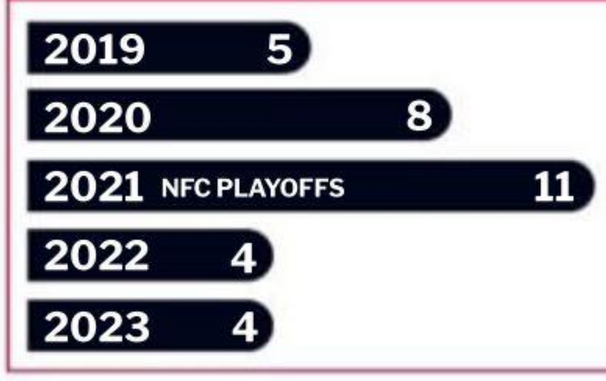
NFC WEST FORECAST **4**

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	at Buffalo	1:00
Sept. 15	L.A. Rams	4:05
Sept. 22	Detroit	4:25
Sept. 29	Washington	4:05
Oct. 6	at San Francisco	4:05
Oct. 13	at Green Bay	1:00
Oct. 21	L.A. Chargers	9:00
Oct. 27	at Miami	1:00
Nov. 3	Chicago	4:05
Nov. 10	N.Y. Jets	4:25
Nov. 17	BYE	
Nov. 24	at Seattle	4:25
Dec. 1	at Minnesota	1:00
Dec. 8	Seattle	4:05
Dec. 15	New England	4:25
Dec. 22	at Carolina	1:00
Dec. 28	at L.A. Rams	TBD
Jan. 4/5	San Francisco	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Jonathan Gannon
Record With Team: 4-13
Career Record: 4-13
Offensive Coordinator: Drew Petzing
Defensive Coordinator: Nick Rallis
Assistant Head Coach/Special Teams Coordinator: Jeff Rodgers
Quarterbacks: Israel Woolfork
Running Backs: Autry Denson
Passing Game Specialist: Spencer Whipple
Tight Ends: Ben Steele
Offensive Line: Klayton Adams
Defensive Line: Derrick LeBlanc
Linebackers: Sam Siefkes
Outside Linebackers: Rob Rodriguez
Defensive Backs: Patrick Toney
Cornerbacks: Ryan Smith

The rebuilding project has started shifting into a reload and reinforce stage for the Arizona Cardinals. It doesn't mean they're done yet; there's still more work to do. But now that they have a sense of themselves and know they're continuing to add the right pieces to strengthen their new foundation, expectation levels are about to increase.

Are they close to being Super Bowl contenders? No. Could they quietly be a surprise team that ekes out enough wins by the end of the season to flirt with a possible playoff appearance? Perhaps. Whatever happens in 2024, the Cardinals are perfectly content with operating under the radar and sticking to their main agenda — keep working, improve week to week, and don't start looking too far ahead.

"We got something special brewing here, I feel like," new inside linebacker Mack Wilson Sr. says. "We're just going to keep working, keep putting it together one day at a time and we'll see where we end up come February."

The Cardinals were a very competitive team in 2023 despite only winning four games and they seem ready to take a big step this year upon retooling their offensive and defensive lines, adding a new No.1 wide receiver in first-round pick Marvin Harrison Jr., and getting stronger and deeper at multiple other spots.

Much of their success, of course, will depend upon the play of quarterback Kyler Murray, who is entering his sixth NFL season. The good news on that front is he's 100 percent recovered from the torn ACL that knocked him out toward the end of 2022, and the expectations for him are high with a full offseason, training camp and preseason to get an even firmer grasp of the offense.

OFFENSE

Murray's knee injury didn't zap any of his freakish speed, and he showed that during the eight games he started upon his midseason return in 2023. It's interesting to note that he lined up under center more during that stretch than at any other point in his career, and that's something that certainly will continue moving forward with head coach Jonathan Gannon and offensive coordinator Drew Petzing. Both men have said they still don't think Murray, a two-time Pro Bowl selection, is close to reaching his ceiling. Murray has fully embraced all the new wrinkles in the system and approach, which included changing his footwork a year ago, and he's practically lived at the team's training facility for the past year and a half.

He'll have more weapons and help around him to make things interesting. It starts up front on the offensive line. Paris Johnson Jr., Arizona's first-round pick a year ago, is expected to move from right tackle, where he started all 17 games and never missed a single snap, to the left side. The Cardinals brought in free agent Jonah Williams from the Bengals, and he'll man the right tackle spot. Veteran Kelvin Beachum returns as a valuable swing tackle, and Arizona might have gotten the steal of the draft in fifth-round tackle Christian Jones from Texas.

The most notable addition, of course, is Harrison, the 6-foot-4 star from Ohio State, who is expected to give the Cardinals' passing game an immediate and much-needed jolt. Pairing him with second-year pro Michael Wilson, emerging tight end Trey McBride and speedy slot receiver Greg Dortch could help Murray notch the first 4,000-yard, 30-touchdown season of his career. Harrison gives the Cardinals a sure-handed receiver and the elite route-runner they haven't had since DeAndre Hopkins and Larry Fitzgerald.

The running game, which ranked fourth in the league last season with 139.1

yards per game, got stronger, too. Not only does featured back James Conner return following the first 1,000-yard rushing season of his career, but the team also added a fast, big-bodied tailback in third-round pick Trey Benson of Florida State, the second running back taken in the draft. His physical style and elusiveness will complement Conner well, and he will likely push for playing time right away.

DEFENSE

This is the area the Cardinals needed to address the most in the offseason, and they didn't dawdle. They signed four free agents who will step right into starting roles in defensive tackles Justin Jones and Bilal Nichols, inside linebacker Mack Wilson Sr. and cornerback Sean Murphy-Bunting. They drafted at least two rookies who are expected to land starting jobs as well in first-round pick Darius Robinson from Missouri and cornerback Max Melton from Rutgers.

The defensive line turned into a shambles last season due to a rash of injuries, but it got stronger — and meaner — with the additions of Jones, Nichols, Khyiris Tonga and Robinson, who will be used primarily at defensive end but will move around up front. Jones, Nichols and Tonga provide a ton of mass to help plug up the running game and disrupt the passing game, and a common theme they share is their durability and dependability.

Arizona added another thumper at inside linebacker to pair with returning starter Kyzir White in the hard-hitting Wilson, who can also line up at edge in various schemes. They should play off each other well given their intensity and ball-seeking tenacity. Bringing back Krys Barnes as the third man in was a shrewd move for depth and insurance.

It's at outside linebacker where questions remain. The Cardinals have plenty of bodies there, but no superstar-type difference-makers. It's expected that BJ Ojulari will take a big step in his second season as an edge rusher, but he'll have to fight for playing time with others such as Zaven Collins and Dennis Gardeck, and unless Ojulari gets quality snaps, his development could be stalled. Robinson's arrival should help in the pass rush, and the jury is out on just how fast rookie Xavier Thomas will be brought up to speed, but it's difficult to see this team improving on last year's sack total of 33, which was the third fewest in the NFL.

As for the defensive secondary, the Cardinals return one of the best safety tandems in the game in veterans Budda Baker and Jalen Thompson, and they added an intriguing player in the speedy Dadrion "Rabbit" Taylor-Demerson, their fourth-round pick out of Texas Tech. Murphy-Bunting is the oldest cornerback in the room at 26, and the key will be finding the right player to start opposite him on the outside. Melton feels like the choice, but three rookies from a year ago will compete with him for the opportunity — Garrett Williams, Starling Thomas V and Kei'Trel Clark.

SPECIALISTS

Matt Prater is entering his 18th NFL season, and although he'll be 40, he remains one of the most dependable kickers in the league, especially from long distance. Prater set a career-high last season with nine field goals made from 50 yards or longer, and he's the NFL's all-time leader in that department with 80. His 74.7 percent success rate from that distance or longer is also the best in league history. Blake Gillikin emerged last season as the team's new punter and posted an impressive 50.6-yard average, second best among punters with at least 50 kicks. The Cardinals brought in a new punt and kickoff returner in DeeJay Dallas, who signed a three-year deal as a free agent. He'll handle the brunt of the load, but Dortch might still get looks as a punt returner, and the team also has a handful of rookies who might also compete for return duties.

FINAL ANALYSIS

It's difficult to see the Cardinals taking a step back for any reason in 2024. They've strengthened the roster enough to expect bigger and better things. How big of a jump they can make from last season's 4-13 finish is anyone's guess, but given the pieces they've added and the key positions they addressed, there's no reason to think they can't flirt with a seven-, eight- or nine-win season. Will that be enough to make the fanbase happy? It should. One-year turnarounds like the 2023 Houston Texans don't come along very often, and in the Cardinals' case, giving them another year to get close to playoff contention will be considered a success. Six wins or fewer will be a failure.

JOE RONDONE/THE REPUBLIC

2023 RESULTS (4-13)

Sept. 10	at Washington	L	16-20
Sept. 17	N.Y. Giants	L	28-31
Sept. 24	Dallas	W	28-16
Oct. 1	at San Francisco	L	16-35
Oct. 8	Cincinnati	L	20-34
Oct. 15	at L.A. Rams	L	9-26
Oct. 22	at Seattle	L	10-20
Oct. 29	Baltimore	L	24-31
Nov. 5	at Cleveland	L	0-27
Nov. 12	Atlanta	W	25-23
Nov. 19	at Houston	L	16-21
Nov. 26	L.A. Rams	L	14-37
Dec. 3	at Pittsburgh	W	24-10
Dec. 17	San Francisco	L	29-45
Dec. 24	at Chicago	L	16-27
Dec. 31	at Philadelphia	W	35-31
Jan. 7	Seattle	L	20-21

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	324.1	19	10
Rushing	139.1	4	3
Passing	184.9	26	13
Scoring	19.4	24	12
Third Down %	39.1	14	10
Points/Play	0.309	25	13

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	355.7	25	12
Rushing	143.2	32	16
Passing	212.5	13	6
Scoring	26.8	31	15
Interceptions	11	T19	T8
Sacks	33	30	14
Opp. Pts./Play	0.429	31	15
TO Differential	-1	19	10

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Kyler Murray	268	176	1,799	10	5
Joshua Dobbs	266	167	1,569	8	5
Clayton Tune	21	12	62	0	2

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
James Conner	208	1,040	5.0	7
Emari Demercardo	58	284	4.9	2
Joshua Dobbs	47	258	5.5	3
Kyler Murray	44	244	5.5	3

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Trey McBride	81	825	10.2	3
Marquise Brown	51	574	11.3	4
Rondale Moore	40	352	8.8	1
Michael Wilson	38	565	14.9	3
Zach Ertz	27	187	6.9	1

KICKING: Matt Prater, 28-33 FGs, 22-23 PATs, 106 points
TACKLES: Kyzir White, 90; Budda Baker, 87
SACKS: Dennis Gardeck, 6.0; Victor Dimukeje, 4.0; BJ Ojulari, 4.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Jalen Thompson, 4; seven tied with 1

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

REUNITED Defensive tackles Justin Jones and Bilal Nichols quickly formed a friendship at the 2018 Senior Bowl and have been friends ever since. They were surprised to learn they both had signed three-year deals with the Cardinals as free agents on the same day. Nichols was with his young daughter in her school's classroom when he got a congratulatory phone call from Jones. "I'm like, 'No way!'" Nichols said. "I'm going to try and keep it quiet with the kids in there, but I'm like, 'No way!' We're going to get a great opportunity to make each other better and make a statement out there. He was like, 'Yeah.' And literally as soon as I walked outside and got into the parking lot, I screamed. Justin's my guy. I can't wait to go out there and go to work with him."

REUNITED 2 In the weeks leading up to the 2024 draft, Cardinals offensive tackle Paris Johnson Jr. kept saying his former college teammate at Ohio State, wide receiver **Marvin Harrison Jr.**, would be an ideal fit in Arizona's offense. He also said Harrison has always suspected he would wind up with the Cardinals even before Johnson was drafted by Arizona in the first round a year ago. Now they're together again. "It's awesome," Harrison Jr. said. "I think this is like two years in the making with Paris. We had this conversation going back to even before he got drafted by the Cardinals. Just getting the chance to play with him again and hopefully when I score some touchdowns, he raises me up in his arms like he used to in college."

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON Former longtime Colts wide receiver and Pro Football Hall of Fame inductee Marvin Harrison Sr. was on hand for his son Marvin Jr.'s introductory news conference upon being drafted with the fourth pick overall. The elder Harrison was asked if he sees a lot of himself in his son. "Oh, a lot," he said. "People say when they see him it looks like the same, like a bigger version of myself. He's very good off the line, he's very explosive, and he runs extremely good routes. He does a lot of things I can do, which is make those big, contested catches. He's going to be a fun guy to watch around here."

SCOUTING THE CARDINALS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP ARIZONA "Kyler Murray should be better this year after knocking off the rust. He didn't look like himself, but that was to be expected. With a full offseason, I predict he'll be back to normal this year. … Marvin Harrison Jr. is a game-changer. Having a receiver that big and that good is going to make Murray's job a lot easier. … They really needed to draft a receiver. The cupboard was pretty bare after Hollywood Brown signed with the Chiefs. … Tight end Trey McBride does a ton of things well. He's a great route-runner and has excellent hands. Would ideally like to see more YAC out of him. He's a high-percentage contributor with 81 catches out of 106 targets and 42 first downs last year. … General manager Monti Ossenfort nailed the Paris Johnson Jr. pick. He's outstanding. … They didn't pick up the fifth-year option for Zaven Collins. He's a decent player but has never really lived up to his first-round status. … Linebacker could use a few upgrades. … Jalen Thompson stands up really well in a safety tandem headlined by Budda Baker. No one runs to the football quite like Baker. … Building a winner in Arizona isn't going to be easy, but Ossenfort is a good talent evaluator."

RICK OSENTOSKI-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 CARDINALS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
1 Murray, Kyler	QB	5-10	207	5	Oklahoma	D1-19	D1-Ari-19
9 Ridder, Desmond	QB	6-4	202	2	Cincinnati	T-Atl-24	D3a-Atl-22
15 Tune, Clayton	QB	6-3	220	1	Houston	D5a-23	D5a-Ari-23

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
22 Carter, Michael	RB	5-8	201	3	North Carolina	W-NYJ-23	D4-NYJ-21
6 Conner, James	RB	6-1	233	7	Pittsburgh	FA-Pit-21	D3b-Pit-17
20 Dallas, DeeJay	RB	5-10	214	4	Miami	FA-Sea-24	D4b-Sea-20
31 Demercado, Emari	RB	5-9	215	1	TCU	FA-23	FA-Ari-23
37 Jones Jr., Tony	RB	5-11	224	3	Notre Dame	W-NO-23	FA-NO-20

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
38 Arias, Daniel	WR	6-3	216	1	Colorado	FA-24	FA-Ari-24
82 Baccellia, Andre	WR	5-10	175	2	Washington	FA-21	FA-KC-20
16 Chisena, Dan	WR	6-3	203	3	Penn State	FA-24	FA-Min-20
4 Dortch, Greg	WR	5-7	175	3	Wake Forest	FA-21	FA-NYJ-19
84 Higgins, Elijah	TE	6-3	235	1	Stanford	W-Mia-23	D6-Mia-23
Jones, Zay	WR	6-2	200	7	East Carolina	FA-Jac-24	D2-Buf-17
85 McBride, Trey	TE	6-4	246	2	Colorado State	D2-22	D2-Ari-22
10 Moore, Chris	WR	6-1	200	8	Cincinnati	FA-Ten-24	D4b-Bal-16
0 Pascal, Zach	WR	6-2	215	6	Old Dominion	FA-Phi-23	FA-Was-17
80 Seikovits, Bernhard	TE	6-5	262	1	None	FA-21	FA-Ari-21
86 Smith, Jeff	WR	6-1	195	5	Boston College	FA-23	FA-NYJ-19
81 Vokolek, Travis	TE	6-6	260	1	Nebraska	FA-23	FA-Bal-23
89 Whiteheart, Blake	TE	6-4	247	1	Wake Forest	FA-23	FA-Ari-23
14 Wilson, Michael	WR	6-2	213	1	Stanford	D3b-23	D3b-Ari-23

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
66 Barton, Jackson	OL	6-7	302	3	Utah	FA-LV-23	D7-Ind-19
68 Beachum, Kelvin	OL	6-3	308	12	SMU	FA-20	D7-Pit-12
62 Brown, Evan	OL	6-3	320	6	SMU	FA-Sea-24	FA-NYG-18
63 Colon, Trystan	OL	6-3	313	4	Missouri	W-NYJ-23	FA-Bal-20
71 Daley, Dennis	OL	6-6	326	5	South Carolina	FA-Ten-23	D6-Car-19
72 Froholdt, Hjalte	OL	6-5	310	4	Arkansas	FA-Cle-23	D4-NE-19
59 Gaines II, Jon	OL	6-4	303	1	UCLA	D4-23	D4-Ari-23
78 Hayes, Marquis	OL	6-5	318	1	Oklahoma	D7-22	D7-Ari-22
76 Hernandez, Will	OL	6-3	332	6	UTEP	FA-NYG-22	D2-NYG-18
75 Howerton, Hayden	OL	6-3	300	1	SMU	W-NE-23	FA-Ten-22
60 Ismael, Keith	OL	6-3	310	3	San Diego State	W-SF-23	D5-Was-20
70 Johnson Jr., Paris	OL	6-6	313	1	Ohio State	D1-23	D1-Ari-23
61 O'Donnell, Carter	OL	6-5	305	1	Alberta	W-Ind-23	FA-Ind-20
67 Pleasants, Austen	OL	6-7	330	1	Ohio	FA-24	FA-Jac-20
65 Wilkinson, Elijah	OL	6-6	314	7	Massachusetts	FA-Atl-23	FA-Den-17
73 Williams, Jonah	OL	6-5	312	5	Alabama	FA-Cin-24	D1-Cin-19

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
91 Collier, L.J.	DL	6-2	291	5	TCU	FA-Sea-23	D1-Sea-19
79 Hoskins, Phil	DL	6-5	315	3	Kentucky	FA-23	D7-Car-21
93 Jones, Justin	DL	6-3	309	6	NC State	FA-Chi-24	D3-LAC-18
96 Jones, Naquan	DL	6-3	313	3	Michigan State	FA-23	FA-Ten-21
98 Lopez, Roy	DL	6-2	318	3	Arizona	FA-23	D6-Hou-21
92 Nichols, Bilal	DT	6-3	313	6	Delaware	FA-LV-24	D5-Chi-18
90 Stille, Ben	DL	6-4	296	2	Nebraska	W-Cle-23	FA-Mia-22
55 Stills, Dante	DL	6-4	286	1	West Virginia	D6b-23	D6b-Ari-23
95 Tonga, Khyiris	DL	6-4	338	3	BYU	FA-Min-24	D7-Chi-21

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
41 Bailey, Markus	LB	6-1	235	4	Purdue	FA-Cin-24	D7-Cin-20
51 Barnes, Krys	LB	6-2	229	4	UCLA	FA-GB-23	FA-GB-20
25 Collins, Zaven	LB	6-4	260	3	Tulsa	D1-21	D1-Ari-21
52 Dimukeje, Victor	LB	6-2	262	3	Duke	D6a-21	D6a-Ari-21
45 Gardeck, Dennis	LB	6-0	232	6	Sioux Falls	FA-18	FA-Ari-18
43 Luketa, Jesse	LB	6-3	253	2	Penn State	D7b-22	D7b-Ari-22
58 Maddox-Williams, T.	LB	6-0	228	1	Rutgers	FA-23	FA-LAC-22
53 Nowaske, Trevor	LB	6-3	235	1	Saginaw Valley St.	W-Det-23	FA-Det-23
18 Ojulari, BJ	LB	6-2	248	1	LSU	D2-23	D2-Ari-23
44 Pappoe, Owen	LB	6-0	225	1	Auburn	D5b-23	D5b-Ari-23
50 Smith, Tyreke	LB	6-3	255	1	Ohio State	FA-23	D5-Sea-22
97 Thomas, Cameron	LB	6-4	267	2	San Diego State	D3a-22	D3a-Ari-22
7 White, Kyzir	LB	6-2	234	6	West Virginia	FA-Phi-23	D4-LAC-18
2 Wilson Sr., Mack	LB	6-1	246	5	Alabama	FA-NE-24	D5a-Cle-19

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3 Baker, Budda	S	5-10	195	7	Washington	D2-17	D2-Ari-17
32 Blount, Joey	S	6-1	201	2	Virginia	FA-23	FA-Sea-22
36 Chachere, Andre	S	6-0	197	3	San Jose State	W-Phi-23	FA-Hou-18
13 Clark, Kei'Trel	CB	5-10	181	1	Louisville	D6a-23	D6a-Ari-23
30 Hall, Darren	CB	6-0	190	3	San Diego State	FA-24	D4-Atl-21
35 McKinley III, Verone	S	5-10	192	2	Oregon	FA-24	FA-Mia-22
23 Murphy-Bunting, S.	CB	6-0	195	5	Central Michigan	FA-Ten-24	D2-TB-19
29 Ojemudia, Michael	DB	6-1	200	4	Iowa	FA-24	D3a-Den-20
26 Price, Bobby	CB	6-3	208	3	Norfolk State	FA-23	FA-Det-20
24 Thomas V, Starling	CB	5-10	194	1	UAB	W-Det-23	FA-Det-23
34 Thompson, Jalen	S	5-11	190	5	Washington State	SD5-19	SD5-Ari-19
21 Williams, Garrett	CB	5-10	192	1	Syracuse	D3a-23	D3a-Ari-23
27 Wilson, Divaad	CB	6-0	195	1	UCF	FA-23	FA-Jac-23

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
46 Brewer, Aaron	LS	6-5	232	12	San Diego State	FA-16	FA-Den-12
12 Gillikin, Blake	P	6-2	196	3	Penn State	FA-23	FA-NO-20
5 Prater, Matt	K	5-10	201	17	UCF	FA-Det-21	FA-Det-06

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR		Marvin Harrison Jr. (R)	0	Zach Pascal
WR	14	Michael Wilson	10	Chris Moore
WR	4	Greg Dortch		Tejhaun Palmer (R)
LT	70	Paris Johnson Jr.	68	Kelvin Beachum
LG	65	Elijah Wilkinson		Isaiah Adams (R)
C	72	Hjalte Froholdt	62	Evan Brown
RG	76	Will Hernandez	63	Trystan Colon
RT	73	Jonah Williams		Christian Jones (R)
TE	85	Trey McBride		Tip Reiman (R)
QB	1	Kyler Murray	9	Desmond Ridder
RB	6	James Conner		Trey Benson (R)

DEFENSE

DE		Darius Robinson (R)	91	L.J. Collier
NT	92	Bilal Nichols	95	Khyiris Tonga
DT	93	Justin Jones	55	Dante Stills
OLB	25	Zaven Collins	18	BJ Ojulari
ILB	7	Kyzir White	44	Owen Pappoe
ILB	2	Mack Wilson Sr.	51	Krys Barnes
OLB	45	Dennis Gardeck	52	Victor Dimukeje
CB	23	Sean Murphy-Bunting	24	Starling Thomas V
CB		Max Melton (R)	21	Garrett Williams
S	3	Budda Baker		D. Taylor-Demerson (R)
S	34	Jalen Thompson	36	Andre Chachere

SPECIALISTS

K	5	Matt Prater	KR	20	DeeJay Dallas
P	12	Blake Gillikin	PR	4	Greg Dortch

17.3

Arizona's defense finished last in defensive Defense-adjusted Value over Average (DVOA) at 17.3 percent according to FTN's DVOA stats.

CARDINALS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: A-

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Marvin Harrison Jr.	WR	6-4	205	Ohio State
1.	Darius Robinson	DL	6-5	286	Missouri
2.	Max Melton	CB	5-11	193	Rutgers
3.	Trey Benson	RB	6-1	223	Florida State
3.	Isaiah Adams	OL	6-4	316	Illinois
3.	Tip Reiman	TE	6-4	273	Illinois
3.	Elijah Jones	CB	6-2	184	Boston College
4.	Dadrion Taylor-Demerson	S	5-10	189	Texas Tech
5.	Xavier Thomas	Edge	6-2	244	Clemson
5.	Christian Jones	OT	6-5	318	Texas
6.	Tejhaun Palmer	WR	6-2	210	UAB
7.	Jaden Davis	CB	5-10	182	Miami (Fla.)

The Cardinals landed at least three prospects who are expected to start right away in Marvin Harrison Jr., Darius Robinson and Max Melton and added six to eight others who could immediately step into primary backup positions. Harrison is the long-term solution at WR1 and has drawn comparisons to franchise icon Larry Fitzgerald. Robinson figures to anchor the defensive line as the starting defensive end, although he will be moved inside and out. Trey Benson projects as the club's featured back of the future. Melton is expected to compete right away for a starting role at outside cornerback.

L.A RAMS

NFC WEST FORECAST

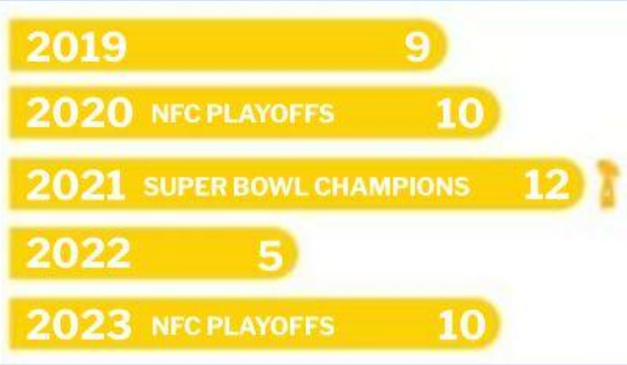
2

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	at Detroit	8:20
Sept. 15	at Arizona	4:05
Sept. 22	San Francisco	4:25
Sept. 29	at Chicago	1:00
Oct. 6	Green Bay	4:25
Oct. 13	BYE	
Oct. 20	Las Vegas	4:05
Oct. 24	Minnesota	8:15
Nov. 3	at Seattle	4:25
Nov. 11	Miami	8:15
Nov. 17	at New England	1:00
Nov. 24	Philadelphia	8:20
Dec. 1	at New Orleans	4:05
Dec. 8	Buffalo	4:25
Dec. 12	at San Francisco	8:15
Dec. 22	at N.Y. Jets	1:00
Dec. 28	Arizona	TBD
Jan. 4/5	Seattle	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Sean McVay
Record With Team: 70-45
Career Record: 70-45
Offensive Coordinator: Mike LaFleur
Defensive Coordinator: Chris Shula
Special Teams Coordinator: Chase Blackburn
Quarterbacks: Dave Ragone
Running Backs: Ron Gould
Wide Receivers: Eric Yarber
Tight Ends/Pass Game Coordinator: Nick Caley
Offensive Line: Ryan Wendell
Defensive Line/Run Game Coordinator: Giff Smith
Inside Linebackers: Greg Williams
Outside Linebackers: Joe Coniglio
Defensive Backs/Pass Game Coordinator: Aubrey Pleasant
Safeties: Chris Beake

As the Rams sat in the locker room after their wild-card round loss to the Detroit Lions, rookie defensive tackle Kobie Turner sat, feeling dejected after the disappointing playoff exit. But Aaron Donald approached, smiling.

"He's like, 'Y'all got a lot of great football left to play,'" Turner recalls. "That was one of the moments where it really hit."

Turner knew then what the rest of the world found out two months later: Donald, the three-time Defensive Player of the Year and future Hall of Famer, had played his last football game. In March, Donald announced his retirement, plunging the Rams head-first into a new era.

Many of the leaders remain the same. Head coach Sean McVay enters his eighth season with the team. Quarterback Matthew Stafford and Cooper Kupp lead the offense, while young players like Turner, Puka Nacua and Kyren Williams look to build upon breakout seasons.

But Donald had been the Rams' sun for 10 years, his gravitational pull bending opponents in ways for his coaches and teammates to exploit. Now, the Rams will have to find a new path forward, without one of this generation's greatest stars.

OFFENSE

Last year, McVay updated his offense from outside zone to a duo-based blocking scheme, relying on physicality to win battles at the line of scrimmage. During the offseason, the Rams reinvested up front to keep running paths clear for Williams and rookie Blake Corum this fall.

First, the Rams agreed to a three-year, $48 million contract to re-sign right guard Kevin Dotson, the late-preseason roster addition who thoroughly fortified the Rams' interior blocking. Then, hours into free agency, general manager Les Snead landed former Pro Bowl left guard Jonah Jackson on a three-year, $51 million deal.

The addition moves Steve Avila inside to center after an All-Rookie campaign at left guard. But Avila played center at TCU, and the Rams felt it was worth it to add the 6-foot-4, 312-pound Jackson to the mix. Jackson ran similar duo concepts in his first four seasons with the Lions, and his three-year commitment ties him contractually to Avila and Dotson.

Beyond that change up front, the Rams return many of the same faces on offense. Stafford, entering his 16th season and fourth in L.A., earned his second Pro Bowl nod in 2023 after playing some of the most efficient football of his career in the final seven games of the regular season.

After spending much of last offseason rehabbing from ankle surgery and then dealing with ankle and hamstring issues during the regular season, Kupp was able to spend a full winter and spring conditioning and preparing for 2024. The seven-year veteran still believes he can reach his 2021 peak, in which led the NFL in receptions, receiving yards and receiving touchdowns. That remains to be seen, but at least he'll be starting training camp this year from a healthier place than last summer.

And he enters this season with less pressure on him to produce following the emergence of Nacua, the fifth-round pick who broke the NFL rookie records for receptions and receiving yards in 2023. Nacua gives the Rams something they have been looking for since losing Robert Woods. He plays with physicality both downfield and in run blocking, and he knows he still has room for improvement. Nacua did say he spent his offseason working on drops after leading the NFL in that category as a rookie.

DAVID REGINEK-USA TODAY SPORTS

The third receiver role will likely be occupied by steady veteran Demarcus Robinson, at least at the beginning of the season. But the speedy Tutu Atwell could find a role in certain matchups as McVay liked to send Atwell in pre-snap motion to get him separation in space. And rookie Jordan Whittington will try to push his way into the competition, too, using his run-blocking as a way to get on the field.

Tight end figures to be a committee situation while veteran Tyler Higbee recovers from an ACL and MCL tear suffered in the playoffs. Davis Allen showed he was capable as a rookie pass-catcher in 2023, while the Rams brought in free agent Colby Parkinson for his blocking ability.

DEFENSE

The big question following Donald's retirement: How could the Rams possibly replace his production in the pass rush after years of commanding two, three or even four blockers? The answer, the Rams maintained all of April, was by committee, and they showed that approach during the draft by taking two pass-rushers in the first and second round and four total with their 10 picks.

The group is headlined by first-round pick Jared Verse and his Florida State teammate Braden Fiske. Verse, an edge rusher, and Fiske, a tackle, played together in Tallahassee for only one season but quickly developed a strong rapport in pass-rush situations. That chemistry jumped off the film to McVay and Snead, and they were eager to reunite the pair in Los Angeles, trading away a future second to Carolina in order to move up and draft Fiske in the second round.

They will join Turner, the runner-up for Defensive Rookie of the Year, and All-Rookie outside linebacker Byron Young in the effort to replace Donald's production. Verse and Fiske will have to work on their run defense to become every-down players, especially with veterans like Michael Hoecht at edge rusher and Bobby Brown III at defensive tackle, but their roles should grow as the season continues.

The difficulty of replacing Donald goes beyond the field, though. The Rams' defense lost many leaders this winter, including Jordan Fuller, a safety who also was a captain, and defensive coordinator Raheem Morris, hired to be head coach of the Atlanta Falcons.

The Rams replaced Morris by promoting Chris Shula, who has served several different roles across the last seven seasons with the Rams. He's worked at every level of the defense, most recently serving as linebackers coach. He plans to keep the Rams in their customary 3-4 defense but will add his own tweaks to the system as he evaluates the team's personnel this summer.

SPECIALISTS

The Rams believe they've found their long-term answer at kicker after last season's merry-go-round, adding Stanford's Joshua Karty in the sixth round. Very reliable from inside 50 yards with the ability to hit from 56, Karty should provide some stability alongside punter Ethan Evans, who made a seamless transition to the NFL last season.

Last year's kick returner, Austin Trammell, remains a free agent, but Corum and Whittington both have some college experience in the roles and could earn playing time in that department.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Expect the Rams to remain competitive but to take an overall step back in 2024. That's not an indictment of the offseason the team put together as much as a reminder of just how impactful Donald has been since 2014. You don't replace that kind of player in one year, so it's natural to expect the Rams to be a worse team on defense. They still might be good enough to make the playoffs if Stafford continues to be one of the conference's best quarterbacks, but the Rams likely aren't ready to challenge the 49ers for NFC West supremacy.

2023 RESULTS (10-7)

Sept.	10	at Seattle	W	30-13
Sept.	17	San Francisco	L	23-30
Sept.	25	at Cincinnati	L	16-19
Oct.	1	at Indianapolis (ot)	W	29-23
Oct.	8	Philadelphia	L	14-23
Oct.	15	Arizona	W	26-9
Oct.	22	Pittsburgh	L	17-24
Oct.	29	at Dallas	L	20-43
Nov.	5	at Green Bay	L	3-20
Nov.	19	Seattle	W	17-16
Nov.	26	at Arizona	W	37-14
Dec.	3	Cleveland	W	36-19
Dec.	10	at Baltimore (ot)	L	31-37
Dec.	17	Washington	W	28-20
Dec.	21	New Orleans	W	30-22
Dec.	31	at N.Y. Giants	W	26-25
Jan.	7	at San Francisco	W	21-20
Postseason				
Jan.	14	at Detroit	L	23-24

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	359.3	7	4
Rushing	120.3	11	7
Passing	239.0	10	5
Scoring	23.8	8	5
Third Down %	42.0	8	5
Points/Play	0.372	9	6

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	337.9	20	10
Rushing	106.8	12	7
Passing	231.1	20	9
Scoring	22.2	19	8
Interceptions	10	T23	11
Sacks	41	T23	T9
Opp. Pts./Play	0.354	19	9
TO Differential	-3	T21	11

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Matthew Stafford	521	326	3,965	24	11
Brett Rypien	38	18	172	0	1
Carson Wentz	24	17	163	2	1

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Kyren Williams	228	1,144	5.0	12
Royce Freeman	77	319	4.1	2
Ronnie Rivers	32	129	4.0	0
Darrell Henderson Jr.	46	112	2.4	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Puka Nacua	105	1,486	14.2	6
Cooper Kupp	59	737	12.5	5
Tyler Higbee	47	495	10.5	2
Tutu Atwell	39	483	12.4	3
Kyren Williams	32	206	6.4	3
Demarcus Robinson	26	371	14.3	4

KICKING: Lucas Havrisik, 15-20 FGs, 19-22 PATs, 64 points; Brett Maher, 17-23 FGs, 13-15 PATs, 64 points
TACKLES: Ernest Jones, 145; Jordan Fuller, 93
SACKS: Kobie Turner, 9.0; Aaron Donald, 8.0; Byron Young, 8.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Jordan Fuller, 3; Ahkello Witherspoon, 3

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

A NEW APPRENTICE Puka Nacua trained with Cooper Kupp during the offseason to prepare for his sophomore season. But Nacua was not initially prepared for the intensity of the workouts, and he vomited into Kupp's bushes during the second day of conditioning. "The landscaping bill goes up a little bit," Kupp quipped.

THE CONDUCTOR **Kobie Turner**, who earned the nickname "The Conductor" for his customary post-sack celebration, sang the national anthem before Lakers and Kings games in Los Angeles this spring. "It was really nerve wracking, sound checking at the Lakers game," Turner says, "because everybody's still doing shoot-around. So you have [D'Angelo Russell] and Chris Paul shooting at separate sides and I'm just at halfcourt singing."

FAMILY TRADE New Rams defensive coordinator Chris Shula is the grandson of legendary former Dolphins head coach Don and son of former Bengals head coach Dave. Early in his career, Shula used to introduce himself as simply "Chris" to avoid any speculation about whether his famous family got him his job. "Now it's something I'm extremely proud of and I take a lot of pride in," Shula says. "The character that they have and the types of coaches that they were, and the types of human beings that they were, it's something that I'm very proud of."

SWITCHING SIDES After a year in Las Vegas, quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo has switched sides in the rivalry between the Rams and 49ers. After six seasons in San Francisco, Garoppolo signed with the Rams to back up Matthew Stafford. Despite his time with the NFC West rivals, Garoppolo says he had bonded with head coach Sean McVay over the years, talking after games and joint practices. "He's always just been a very perceptive guy. He sees a lot of things, sees it very well, sees it for what it is and that's a big part of how I got here," Garoppolo says. "I think he had a vision, talked me through it."

SCOUTING THE RAMS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP LOS ANGELES "Matthew Stafford hasn't lost zip on the football. He can still sling it. The throws he made last season were really impressive to me. … Puka Nacua was excellent in every phase of the game as a rookie. What he does for an encore is going to be really intriguing. … Kyren Williams has been a great find. He's undersized, but he's shifty and tough. The film doesn't lie, or his production (1,144 yards, 12 touchdowns, 5.0 average per carry). … Cooper Kupp is determined to bounce back to where he was a few seasons ago as one of the most prolific receivers in the league. Late in the season, he was showing signs that he's back. He caught eight passes for 115 yards and a touchdown on 10 targets against the Ravens in December and eight passes for 111 yards and a touchdown on eight targets against the Commanders. … Kevin Dotson was a smart extension. He has really developed into a quality right guard. … Love the Braden Fiske pick. His motor is special. … Obviously, they'll have some issues replacing Aaron Donald. Hall of Fame defensive tackles don't grow on trees. … Drafting Jared Verse and Fiske should go a long way toward making up for the loss of Donald. … I see Tre'Davious White reviving his career as long as he can get and stay healthy. His cover skills are stellar."

KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 RAMS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
13 Bennett, Stetson	QB	5-11	190	1	Georgia	D4-23	D4-LAR-23
11 Garoppolo, Jimmy	QB	6-2	225	10	Eastern Illinois	FA-LV-24	D2-NE-14
9 Stafford, Matthew	QB	6-3	220	15	Georgia	T-Det-21	D1a-Det-09
12 Winn, Dresser	QB	6-2	215	1	Tennessee-Martin	FA-23	FA-LAR-23

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
21 Evans, Zach	RB	5-11	202	1	Ole Miss	D6-23	D6-LAR-23
20 Rivers, Ronnie	RB	5-9	195	2	Fresno State	FA-22	FA-Ari-22
Scott, Boston	RB	5-6	203	5	Louisiana Tech	FA-Phi-24	D6-NO-18
23 Williams, Kyren	RB	5-9	194	2	Notre Dame	D5-22	D5-LAR-22

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
87 Allen, Davis	TE	6-6	245	1	Clemson	D5-23	D5-LAR-23
5 Atwell, Tutu	WR	5-9	165	3	Louisville	D2-21	D2-LAR-21
82 Forristall, Miller	TE	6-5	244	1	Alabama	FA-23	FA-Ten-21
89 Higbee, Tyler	TE	6-6	255	8	Western Kentucky	D4a-16	D4a-LAR-16
16 Johnson, Tyler	WR	6-1	205	4	Minnesota	FA-23	D5-TB-20
83 Kalinic, Nikola	TE	6-4	245	2	York	FA-23	FA-Ind-22
10 Kupp, Cooper	WR	6-2	208	7	East. Washington	D3a-17	D3a-LAR-17
84 Long, Hunter	TE	6-5	253	3	Boston College	T-Mia-23	D3-Mia-21
17 Nacua, Puka	WR	6-2	205	1	BYU	D5-23	D5-LAR-23
86 Parkinson, Colby	TE	6-7	265	4	Stanford	FA-Sea-24	D4a-Sea-20
15 Robinson, Demarcus	WR	6-1	203	8	Florida	FA-23	D4-KC-16
19 Smith, Xavier	WR	5-9	174	1	Florida A&M	FA-23	FA-LAR-23

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
61 Arcuri, AJ	OL	6-7	320	2	Michigan State	D7c-22	D7c-LAR-22
73 Avila, Steve	OL	6-3	332	1	TCU	D2-23	D2-LAR-23
60 Bruss, Logan	OL	6-5	309	2	Wisconsin	D3-22	D3-LAR-22
69 Dotson, Kevin	OL	6-4	321	4	Louisiana	T-Pit-23	D4b-Pit-20
79 Havenstein, Rob	OL	6-8	330	9	Wisconsin	D2-15	D2-LAR-15
77 Jackson, Alaric	OL	6-7	285	3	Iowa	FA-21	FA-LAR-21
72 Jackson, Jonah	OL	6-4	311	4	Ohio State	FA-Det-24	D3b-Det-20
68 McAllister, Mike	OL	6-2	305	1	Youngstown State	FA-23	FA-LAR-23
71 McClendon Jr., Warren	OL	6-4	300	1	Georgia	D5-23	D5-LAR-23
63 Miller, Grant	OL	6-3	306	1	Baylor	FA-24	FA-LAR-23
70 Noteboom, Joe	OL	6-5	321	6	TCU	D3-18	D3-LAR-18
57 Thomas, Zach	OL	6-5	300	2	San Diego State	FA-22	D6-Chi-22

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
95 Brown III, Bobby	NT	6-4	324	3	Texas A&M	D4a-21	D4a-LAR-21
98 Durden, Cory	DT	6-4	292	1	NC State	FA-23	FA-LAR-23
94 Johnson, Desjuan	DE	6-3	252	1	Toledo	D7-23	D7-LAR-23
52 Murchison, Larrell	DT	6-2	297	4	NC State	W-Ten-22	D5-Ten-20
91 Turner, Kobie	NT	6-2	288	1	Wake Forest	D3-23	D3-LAR-23

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
54 Fatukasi, Olakunle	LB	6-2	240	1	Rutgers	FA-23	FA-TB-22
31 Hampton, Nick	OLB	6-3	235	1	App State	D5-23	D5-LAR-23
97 Hoecht, Michael	OLB	6-4	310	3	Brown	FA-20	FA-LAR-20
35 Hummel, Jacob	LB	6-1	235	2	Iowa State	FA-22	FA-LAR-22
53 Jones IV, Ernest	LB	6-2	230	3	South Carolina	D3-21	D3-LAR-21
32 Mathis, Ochaun	OLB	6-5	260	1	Nebraska	D6-23	D6-LAR-23
59 Reeder, Troy	LB	6-3	245	5	Delaware	FA-23	FA-LAR-19
56 Rozeboom, Christian	LB	6-2	230	3	South Dakota St.	FA-21	FA-LAR-20
96 Thomas II, Keir	OLB	6-2	275	2	Florida State	FA-22	FA-LAR-22
51 VanValkenburg, Zach	OLB	6-4	263	1	Iowa	FA-22	FA-LV-22
0 Young, Byron	OLB	6-2	250	1	Tennessee	D3a-23	D3a-LAR-23

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
3 Curl, Kamren	S	6-2	198	4	Arkansas	FA-Was-24	D7a-Was-20
14 Durant, Cobie	DB	5-11	180	2	South Carolina St.	D4-22	D4-LAR-22
34 Ingle, Tanner	DB	5-8	179	1	NC State	FA-23	FA-LAR-23
38 Jolly, Shaun	DB	5-9	180	2	App State	FA-23	FA-Cle-22
1 Kendrick, Derion	DB	6-0	190	2	Georgia	D6b-22	D6b-LAR-22
37 Lake, Quentin	DB	6-1	201	2	UCLA	D6a-22	D6a-LAR-22
41 McCutcheon, Cam.	DB	6-1	204	1	West. Carolina	FA-23	FA-LAR-23
25 Taylor II, Jason	DB	6-0	204	1	Oklahoma State	D7-23	D7-LAR-23
6 Tomlinson, Tre	DB	5-9	180	1	TCU	D6-23	D6-LAR-23
27 White, Tre'Davious	CB	5-11	192	7	LSU	FA-Buf-24	D1-Buf-17
24 Williams, Darious	CB	5-9	187	6	UAB	FA-Jac-24	FA-Bal-18
2 Yeast, Russ	DB	5-10	195	2	Kansas State	D7b-22	D7b-LAR-22

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
49 Brown, Tanner	K	6-0	167	1	Oklahoma State	FA-24	FA-LAR-23
42 Evans, Ethan	P	6-3	231	1	Wingate	D7-23	D7-LAR-23
47 Ward, Alex	LS	6-4	240	1	UCF	FA-23	FA-LAR-23

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	10	Cooper Kupp	16	Tyler Johnson
WR	17	Puka Nacua	88	Jordan Whittington (R)
WR	15	Demarcus Robinson	5	Tutu Atwell
LT	77	Alaric Jackson	70	Joe Noteboom
LG	72	Jonah Jackson	60	Logan Bruss
C	73	Steve Avila	50	Beaux Limmer (R)
RG	69	Kevin Dotson	70	Joe Noteboom
RT	79	Rob Havenstein	71	Warren McClendon Jr.
TE	86	Colby Parkinson	87	Davis Allen
QB	9	Matthew Stafford	11	Jimmy Garoppolo
RB	23	Kyren Williams	22	Blake Corum (R)

DEFENSE

DE	94	Desjuan Johnson		Anthony Goodlow (R)
NT	91	Kobie Turner	52	Larrell Murchison
DT	95	Bobby Brown III	55	Braden Fiske (R)
OLB	0	Byron Young	32	Ochaun Mathis
ILB	53	Ernest Jones IV	35	Jacob Hummel
ILB	56	Christian Rozeboom	59	Troy Reeder
OLB	8	Jared Verse (R)	97	Michael Hoecht
CB	24	Darious Williams	1	Derion Kendrick
CB	27	Tre'Davious White	6	Tre Tomlinson
NB	14	Cobie Durant	38	Shaun Jolly
S	3	Kamren Curl	2	Russ Yeast
S	37	Quentin Lake	26	Kamren Kinchens (R)

SPECIALISTS

K	43	Joshua Karty (R)	KR 22	Blake Corum (R)
P	42	Ethan Evans	PR 20	Ronnie Rivers

-9.2

The Rams finished dead last in special teams Defense-adjusted Value over Average (DVOA) at -9.2 percent per FTN's DVOA stats. Los Angeles was six percentage points worse than the 31st-place team.

RAMS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Jared Verse	EDGE	6-4	250	Florida State
2.	Braden Fiske	DT	6-4	295	Florida State
3.	Blake Corum	RB	5-8	213	Michigan
3.	Kamren Kinchens	S	5-11	205	Miami (Fla.)
5.	Brennan Jackson	EDGE	6-4	266	Washington State
6.	Tyler Davis	DT	6-2	300	Clemson
6.	Joshua Karty	K	6-2	208	Stanford
6.	Jordan Whittington	WR	6-1	204	Texas
6.	Beaux Limmer	C	6-5	307	Arkansas
7.	KT Leveston	OG	6-4	337	Kansas State

The Rams made an effort to address their front seven with the additions of the Florida State duo of Jared Verse and Braden Fiske, plus the high-effort pieces of Brennan Jackson and Tyler Davis. Kamren Kinchens fills a need for talent in the secondary. Running back Blake Corum is set for a backup role, but an important one. Late-round offensive line depth is a boost. Joshua Karty was a necessary addition after the Rams failed to address kicker early last offseason and suffered for it through 2023.

SF 49ERS

NFC WEST FORECAST

1

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 9	N.Y. Jets	8:15
Sept. 15	at Minnesota	1:00
Sept. 22	at L.A. Rams	4:25
Sept. 29	New England	4:05
Oct. 6	Arizona	4:05
Oct. 10	at Seattle	8:15
Oct. 20	Kansas City	4:25
Oct. 27	Dallas	8:20
Nov. 3	BYE	
Nov. 10	at Tampa Bay	1:00
Nov. 17	Seattle	4:05
Nov. 24	at Green Bay	4:25
Dec. 1	at Buffalo	8:20
Dec. 8	Chicago	4:25
Dec. 12	L.A. Rams	8:15
Dec. 22	at Miami	4:25
Dec. 30	Detroit	8:15
Jan. 4/5	at Arizona	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND

2019	SUPER BOWL RUNNER-UP	13
2020		6
2021	NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME	10
2022	NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME	13
2023	SUPER BOWL RUNNER-UP	12

THE COACHES

Head Coach: Kyle Shanahan
Record With Team: 64-51
Career Record: 64-51
Defensive Coordinator: Nick Sorensen
Special Teams Coordinator: Brian Schneider
Quarterbacks: Brian Griese
Running Backs: Robert Turner Jr.
Wide Receivers: Leonard Hankerson
Tight Ends: Brian Fleury
Offensive Line/Run Game Coordinator: Chris Foerster
Passing Game Specialist: Klint Kubiak
Defensive Line: Kris Kocurek
Linebackers: Johnny Holland
Defensive Backs: Daniel Bullocks

Just call the 49ers Team Heartbreak. They officially earned the distinction with their 25-22 overtime loss to the Chiefs in Super Bowl LVIII February in which they became the seventh team to lose the big game after having a double-digit lead.

It added to the agony that the 49ers have endured during a five-season span in which they've lost two Super Bowls and two NFC Championship Games. In January 2022, in a 20-17 loss to the Rams, they became the fourth team to lose a 10-point fourth-quarter lead in a conference title game. In February 2020, in a 31-20 loss to Kansas City, they became the third team in league history to squander a double-digit fourth-quarter lead in a Super Bowl.

"We need finishers in every area of our team." general manager John Lynch said two days after last season's Super Bowl loss. "We've got a lot of those. And it still wasn't quite good enough."

The good news: The 49ers are oh so close. And they had an NFL-high nine Pro Bowl players last year, all of whom are returning in their quest to finally finish and end their 29-season Super Bowl title drought.

OFFENSE

Look out: The 49ers are returning all 11 Super Bowl starters from a unit that ranked second in the NFL in yards gained and third in points scored and could be even better with Brock Purdy, 24, entering his second full season as the starting quarterback. Last year, Purdy became the franchise's first Pro Bowl QB since 2002; he set the 49ers' single-season record for passing yards; and he posted the 14th-highest passer rating in league history.

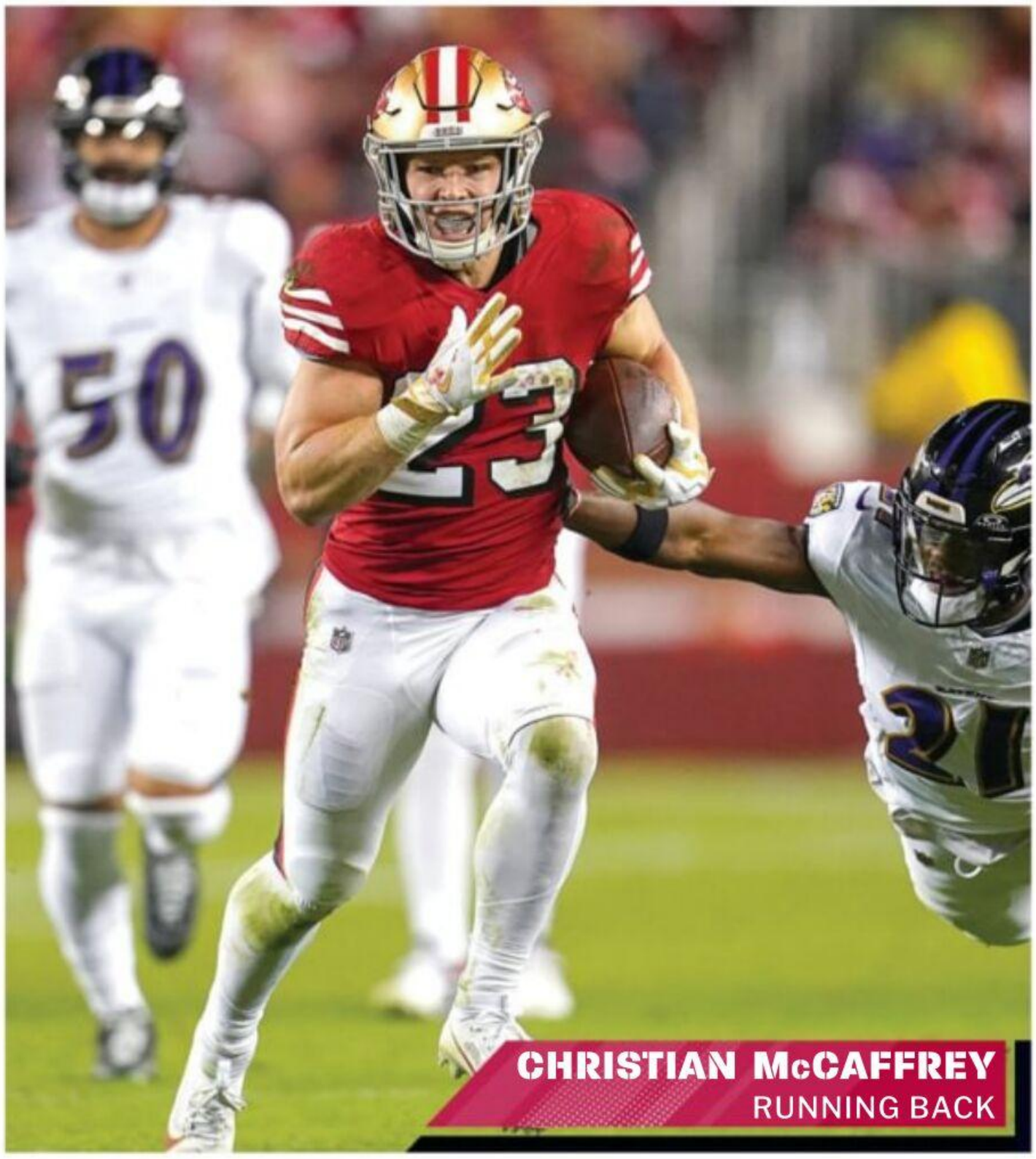
Purdy's rapid development since he was the 262nd and last pick in the 2022 draft has been aided by the 49ers' constellation of skill-position stars. In 2023, the 49ers became the first team in NFL history to have a running back (Christian McCaffrey), a tight end (George Kittle) and two wide receivers (Brandon Aiyuk, Deebo Samuel) gain at least 1,000 yards from scrimmage.

McCaffrey shone the brightest in 2023. The NFL's Offensive Player of the Year led the league in yards from scrimmage (2,023), became the first 49er to lead the NFL in rushing (1,459) since Joe Perry in 1954 and scored the second-most touchdowns (21) in franchise history. However, he also led the league in touches (339) and ranks fifth among active players in that category (1,806). So it might be prudent for the 49ers to spell McCaffrey more frequently with backups that include Elijah Mitchell and rookie Isaac Guerendo, a fourth-round pick whose 40-yard dash (4.33 seconds) was the fastest among running backs at the NFL Scouting Combine.

The 49ers also added young talent to an already stacked group of pass-catchers by using their first-round pick on Florida wide receiver Ricky Pearsall. The rookie joins Samuel, Aiyuk and Kittle, the latter two of whom became the 49ers' first duo since 1998 to have 1,000 receiving yards in the same season.

The offensive line, led by ageless All-Pro left tackle Trent Williams, was solid in 2023. The 49ers allowed 34 sacks, matching the sixth fewest in the league, and ranked third in rushing yards per game (140.5). However, Purdy absorbed 11 hits in the Super Bowl, many from unblocked defenders on crucial snaps, and the breakdowns inspired social-media howling for the 49ers to upgrade their front five.

The 49ers' starters — including left guard Aaron Banks, center Jake Brendel, right guard Jon Feliciano and right tackle Colton McKivitz — will likely remain intact. The 49ers' most notable addition was guard Dominick Puni, a third-round pick who could provide training-camp competition for Feliciano.



CARY EDMONDSON-USA TODAY SPORTS

DEFENSE

The 49ers allowed the third-fewest points in the NFL and ranked eighth in yards allowed in 2023, but they fired first-year defensive coordinator Steve Wilks. Among the reasons: They led the league in both categories in 2022, and there was an expectation that they could be even more dominant after they added Pro Bowl defensive tackle Javon Hargrave to their core.

Yes, the standards are high in Santa Clara. And the 49ers are hoping to reach them with their new leadership. They promoted Nick Sorensen to replace Wilks and hired former Rams defensive coordinator and Chargers head coach Brandon Staley to assist their rookie coordinator.

Sorensen and Staley have plenty with which to work. The 49ers have All-Pros at all three levels of their defense in edge rusher Nick Bosa, linebacker Fred Warner, cornerback Charvarius Ward and safety Talanoa Hufanga.

They also will return Hargrave, but he's part of a weakened defensive interior. The 49ers released stalwart defensive tackle Arik Armstead after he declined a pay cut and replaced him by trading a seventh-round pick to the Texans for Maliek Collins. They might have offset that loss by signing pass-rusher Leonard Floyd, one of three NFL players to have at least nine sacks in each of the last three seasons. Floyd replaces Chase Young, last year's disappointing trade-deadline acquisition who signed with the Saints.

There's reason to believe two of their best players will be better in 2024. Bosa had 10.5 sacks, eight fewer than his 2022 total, and said that his drop-off was tied to his contract holdout that ended shortly before the regular-season opener. Hargrave had seven sacks, four fewer than he had for the Eagles in 2022, but he also finished the season playing with a torn thumb ligament, an injury he suffered in mid-November.

At linebacker, the 49ers signed De'Vondre Campbell, an All-Pro with the Packers in 2021, which was a sign Dre Greenlaw likely won't be ready for Week 1 after suffering a torn Achilles in the Super Bowl.

The 49ers will return cornerbacks Charvarius Ward, a second-team All-Pro last season, and Deommodore Lenoir. And their No. 3 could be free-agent signee Isaac Yiadom, who ranked eighth in the NFL with 14 pass breakups last year despite making only eight starts. Their back end figures to feature safeties Ji'Ayir Brown, last year's third-round pick, and Hufanga, who is returning from a torn ACL he suffered in November.

SPECIALISTS

The 49ers' third-round gamble last year on a kicker, Jake Moody, mostly paid off. Moody made 21-of-25 kicks, became one of three kickers in franchise history to make multiple field goals of 55-plus yards and connected on 60 straight extra-point attempts, the NFL's longest streak since PATs became 33-yard tries in 2015. He also became the only kicker in Super Bowl history to make two field goals of 50-plus yards, but he did have a crucial extra point blocked in the fourth quarter of a game that went to overtime.

Ultra-reliable punter Mitch Wishnowsky will return for a sixth season, but the 49ers will have to replace kicker returner Ray-Ray McCloud, who signed with the Falcons. Pearsall and fellow rookie wideout Jacob Cowing, a fourth-round pick, returned punts in college. Guerendo arrives with experience handling kickoff returns.

FINAL ANALYSIS

Ending their title drought won't be easy. Only three of the first 56 teams that have lost a Super Bowl have returned to win the next season. More practically, the 49ers could be hard-pressed to repeat last season's lack of attrition: Their nine Pro Bowl players combined to miss just seven starts due to injury. Still, with this much talent, there's reason to believe that Team Heartbreak could be the franchise's first to hoist the Lombardi Trophy since January 1995.

2023 RESULTS (12-5)

Sept.	10	at Pittsburgh	W	30-7
Sept.	17	at L.A. Rams	W	30-23
Sept.	21	N.Y. Giants	W	30-12
Oct.	1	Arizona	W	35-16
Oct.	8	Dallas	W	42-10
Oct.	15	at Cleveland	L	17-19
Oct.	23	at Minnesota	L	17-22
Oct.	29	Cincinnati	L	17-31
Nov.	12	at Jacksonville	W	34-3
Nov.	19	Tampa Bay	W	27-14
Nov.	23	at Seattle	W	31-13
Dec.	3	at Philadelphia	W	42-19
Dec.	10	Seattle	W	28-16
Dec.	17	at Arizona	W	45-29
Dec.	25	Baltimore	L	19-33
Dec.	31	at Washington	W	27-10
Jan.	7	L.A. Rams	L	20-21
Postseason				
Jan.	20	Green Bay	W	24-21
Jan.	28	Detroit	W	34-31
Feb.	11	Kansas City (ot)	L	22-25

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	398.4	2	1
Rushing	140.5	3	2
Passing	257.9	4	3
Scoring	28.9	3	2
Third Down %	47.5	4	3
Points/Play	0.466	1	1

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	303.9	8	3
Rushing	89.7	3	3
Passing	214.2	14	7
Scoring	17.5	3	1
Interceptions	22	T1	T1
Sacks	48	T7	T1
Opp. Pts./Play	0.300	3	1
TO Differential	+10	T5	T3

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Brock Purdy	444	308	4,280	31	11
Sam Darnold	46	28	297	2	1

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Christian McCaffrey	272	1,459	5.4	14
Elijah Mitchell	75	281	3.7	2
Deebo Samuel	37	225	6.1	5
Jordan Mason	40	206	5.2	3
Brock Purdy	39	144	3.7	2

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Brandon Aiyuk	75	1,342	17.9	7
Christian McCaffrey	67	564	8.4	7
George Kittle	65	1,020	15.7	6
Deebo Samuel	60	892	14.9	7

KICKING: Jake Moody, 21-25 FGs, 60-61 PATs, 123 points
TACKLES: Fred Warner, 132; Dre Greenlaw, 120
SACKS: Nick Bosa, 10.5; Javon Hargrave, 7.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Charvarius Ward, 5; Fred Warner, 4

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

SIDE HUSTLE Quarterback **Brock Purdy** can also pitch — products. Purdy, the NFL's most underpaid QB, has supplemented his relatively modest contract with a slew of endorsements. Purdy, who will earn a $985,000 base salary in 2024, has signed deals with Toyota, Alaska Airlines, John Deere and Buffalo Wild Wings. The Iowa State alum also has a deal with Pioneer Seeds, which is based in Johnston, Iowa. How is Purdy developing as an actor? "I think I still need some more classes," Purdy said.

BACK UP THE BRINK'S Purdy figures to move from underpaid to wildly wealthy in 2025. That's when he'll become eligible for a contract extension that could place him near the top of the QB market, assuming he continues his career trajectory. The NFL's highest-paid QB, Cincinnati's Joe Burrow, earns an average annual salary of $55 million. Owner Jed York is prepared to open the vault: "It's not hard," York says. "It's what the market is. Brock is going to ask for something that no one has ever asked for before."

JUST A BIT OUTSIDE All-Pro linebacker Fred Warner is elite when it comes to hitting running backs. And he's awful when it comes to hitting his target with a baseball. Warner tossed a scud when he threw out the first pitch before the San Francisco Giants' home opener on April 5, a misfire he good-naturedly blamed on the birth of his first child a month earlier. At least that was one of his excuses: "I guess that's what happens when you don't warm up. … I'll leave that to sleep deprivation."

IRON MAN Pass rusher Leonard Floyd has played 108 straight games — 99 in the regular season — despite dealing with ailments that include a broken hand and an ankle injury he suffered in training camp in 2021 that required offseason surgery. He traces the roots of his toughness to the work he did as a teenager picking watermelons during suffocating summers in Chauncey, Georgia. "That's real hard labor," Floyd says. "So that teaches you to grind."

SCOUTING THE 49ERS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP SAN FRANCISCO "Christian McCaffrey does so many things well. He's worth every penny. … They've got to figure out these contractual-trade questions with their wide receivers. Brandon Aiyuk isn't posturing. He's legitimately unhappy. … Deebo Samuel has handled the trade rumors pretty well. When you draft and develop players, these things happen as far as guys you have to make tough calls on if you're going to pay them or not. … Brock Purdy keeps getting better. You can call him a system quarterback or whatever, but he's much more than that. He's a sound quarterback in every phase. … George Kittle is truly unselfish. You never hear a complaint out of that guy. He loves it all, blocking, etc. … Trent Williams is a first-ballot Hall of Famer in my book. He's still the enforcer on that line. … Haven't seen a fullback in a long time that's as good at catching passes as Kyle Juszczyk. … Trading for Maliek Collins gives the 49ers a gap-shooting presence. .. Nick Bosa is too dominant for words. Extremely difficult blocking assignment. … Fred Warner sees the game differently than everyone else. He's smart, fast and hits hard. … Talanoa Hufanga reminds me a lot of Troy Polamalu. … Real shame what happened to Dre Greenlaw. Love watching him play, can't wait to see him back on the field."

KYLE TERADA-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 49ERS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Allen, Brandon	QB	6-2	209	7	Arkansas	FA-Cin-23	D6-Jac-16
5 Dobbs, Joshua	QB	6-3	220	7	Tennessee	FA-Min-24	D4-Pit-17
13 Purdy, Brock	QB	6-1	220	2	Iowa State	D7-22	D7-SF-22
RUNNING BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
44 Juszczyk, Kyle	FB	6-2	235	11	Harvard	FA-17	D4-Bal-13
24 Mason, Jordan	RB	5-11	223	2	Georgia Tech	FA-22	FA-SF-22
23 McCaffrey, Christian	RB	5-11	210	7	Stanford	T-Car-22	D1-Car-17
25 Mitchell, Elijah	RB	5-10	200	3	Louisiana	D6-21	D6-SF-21
32 Taylor, Patrick	RB	6-1	217	3	Memphis	FA-GB-24	FA-GB-20
RECEIVERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
11 Aiyuk, Brandon	WR	6-0	200	4	Arizona State	D1b-20	D1b-SF-20
10 Bell, Ronnie	WR	6-0	190	1	Michigan	D7b-23	D7b-SF-23
84 Conley, Chris	WR	6-3	205	9	Georgia	FA-Ten-23	D3-KC-15
6 Gray, Danny	WR	6-0	200	2	SMU	D3b-22	D3b-SF-22
15 Jennings, Jauan	WR	6-3	212	3	Tennessee	D7-20	D7-SF-20
85 Kittle, George	TE	6-4	250	7	Iowa	D5a-17	D5a-SF-17
81 Latu, Cameron	TE	6-5	244	1	Alabama	D3c-23	D3c-SF-23
86 Martin, Tay	WR	6-3	185	1	Oklahoma State	FA-22	FA-SF-22
1 Samuel, Deebo	WR	6-0	215	5	South Carolina	D2-19	D2-SF-19
82 Saubert, Eric	TE	6-5	253	6	Drake	FA-Hou-24	D5-Atl-17
19 Taylor, Trent	WR	5-8	181	6	Louisiana Tech	FA-Chi-24	D5-SF-17
88 Tonges, Jake	TE	6-4	240	2	California	FA-23	FA-Chi-22
9 Willis, Brayden	TE	6-4	240	1	Oklahoma	D7a-23	D7a-SF-23
OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
67 Alarcon, Isaac	OL	6-6	320	1	Monterrey Institute	FA-24	FA-Dal-20
65 Banks, Aaron	OL	6-5	325	3	Notre Dame	D2-21	D2-SF-21
78 Bartch, Ben	OL	6-6	315	4	St. John's (MN)	FA-23	D4-Jac-20
64 Brendel, Jake	OL	6-4	299	6	UCLA	FA-20	FA-Dal-16
74 Burford, Spencer	OL	6-4	300	2	UTSA	D4-22	D4-SF-22
66 Davis, Jesse	OL	6-6	309	7	Idaho	FA-23	FA-Sea-15
55 Feliciano, Jon	OL	6-4	325	9	Miami	FA-NYG-23	D4-LV-15
77 Gutierrez, Alfredo	OL	6-9	332	1	Tecno. de Monterrey	FA-21	FA-SF-21
60 Gutierrez, Sebastian	OL	6-5	308	1	Minot State	FA-23	FA-Den-22
Hubbard, Chris	OL	6-4	295	10	UAB	FA-Ten-24	FA-Pit-13
61 Luciano, Corey	OL	6-4	307	1	Washington	FA-23	FA-SF-23
68 McKivitz, Colton	OL	6-6	301	4	West Virginia	D5-20	D5-SF-20
76 Moore, Jaylon	OL	6-4	311	3	Western Michigan	D5a-21	D5a-SF-21
75 Parker, Brandon	T	6-8	320	6	North Carolina A&T	FA-LV-24	D3a-LV-18
71 Williams, Trent	T	6-5	320	14	Oklahoma	T-Was-20	D1-Was-10
63 Zakelj, Nick	OL	6-6	316	2	Fordham	D6a-22	D6a-SF-22
DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
58 Barrett, Alex	DE	6-2	250	2	San Diego State	FA-19	FA-Det-17
51 Beal Jr., Robert	DE	6-4	250	1	Georgia	D5b-23	D5b-SF-23
97 Bosa, Nick	DE	6-4	266	5	Ohio State	D1-19	D1-SF-19
91 Brown IV, Earnest	DE	6-5	270	1	Northwestern	FA-24	D5-LAR-21
40 Bryant, Austin	DL	6-5	250	5	Clemson	FA-Det-23	D4-Det-19
99 Collins, Maliek	DT	6-2	308	8	Nebraska	T-Hou-24	D3-Dal-16
93 Davis, Kalia	DL	6-2	310	2	UCF	D6b-22	D6b-SF-22
92 Elliott, Jordan	DT	6-4	303	4	Missouri	FA-Cle-24	D3a-Cle-20
56 Floyd, Leonard	DE	6-5	240	8	Georgia	FA-Buf-24	D1-Chi-16
90 Givens, Kevin	DL	6-1	285	4	Penn State	FA-19	FA-SF-19
94 Gross-Matos, Yetur	DE	6-5	265	4	Penn State	FA-Car-24	D2a-Car-20
98 Hargrave, Javon	DT	6-2	305	8	South Carolina St.	FA-Phi-23	D3-Pit-16
95 Jackson, Drake	DL	6-4	273	2	USC	D2-22	D2-SF-22
60 Johnson III, Raymond	DE	6-3	264	2	Georgia Southern	FA-24	FA-NYG-21
96 McGill, T.Y.	DL	6-0	295	8	NC State	FA-22	FA-Sea-15
67 Okuayinonu, Sam	DL	6-1	269	2	Maryland	FA-23	FA-Ten-22
LINEBACKERS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
40 Bryant, Austin	LB	6-5	250	5	Clemson	FA-24	D4-Det-19
59 Campbell, De'Vondre	LB	6-4	232	8	Minnesota	FA-GB-24	D4-Atl-16
45 Flannigan-Fowles, D.	LB	6-2	223	4	Arizona	FA-19	FA-SF-19
50 Graham, Jalen	LB	6-3	220	1	Purdue	D7c-23	D7c-SF-23
57 Greenlaw, Dre	LB	6-0	230	5	Arkansas	D5-19	D5-SF-19
59 Robinson, Curtis	LB	6-3	235	3	Stanford	FA-21	FA-Den-21
47 Turner, Ezekiel	LB	6-2	214	6	Washington	FA-Ari-24	FA-Ari-18
54 Warner, Fred	LB	6-3	230	6	BYU	D3a-18	D3a-SF-18
53 Winters, Dee	LB	5-11	227	1	TCU	D6-23	D6-SF-23
DEFENSIVE BACKS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
27 Brown, Ji'Ayir	S	5-11	202	1	Penn State	D3a-23	D3a-SF-23
38 Hall, Kemon	CB	5-11	190	3	North Texas	FA-23	FA-LAC-19
35 Harris, Erik	S	6-2	225	8	California (PA)	FA-23	FA-NO-16
41 Hawkins, Tayler	S	6-1	205	1	San Diego State	FA-23	FA-SF-22
29 Hufanga, Talanoa	S	6-0	200	3	USC	D5c-21	D5c-SF-21
2 Lenoir, Deommodore	DB	5-10	200	3	Oregon	D5b-21	D5b-SF-21
26 Lucas, Chase	CB	5-11	184	2	Arizona State	FA-Det-24	D7-Det-22
28 Luter Jr., Darrell	CB	6-0	190	1	South Alabama	D5a-23	D5a-SF-23
30 Odum, George	S	6-1	202	6	Central Arkansas	FA-Ind-22	FA-Ind-18
20 Thomas, Ambry	CB	6-0	190	3	Michigan	D3b-21	D3b-SF-21
7 Ward, Charvarius	CB	6-1	196	6	Middle Tennessee	FA-KC-22	FA-Dal-18
0 Womack III, Samuel	CB	5-10	189	2	Toledo	D5-22	D5-SF-22
33 Ya-Sin, Rock	CB	5-11	195	5	Temple	FA-Bal-24	D2-Ind-19
22 Yiadom, Isaac	CB	6-1	188	6	Boston College	FA-NO-24	D3-Den-18
SPECIALISTS	**POS**	**HT**	**WT**	**EXP**	**COLLEGE**	**ACQUIRED**	**ENTRY**
4 Moody, Jake	K	6-1	210	1	Michigan	D3b-23	D3b-SF-23
46 Pepper, Taybor	LS	6-4	245	6	Michigan State	FA-20	FA-GB-17
18 Wishnowsky, Mitch	P	6-2	220	5	Utah	D4-19	D4-SF-19

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	1	Deebo Samuel		Ricky Pearsall (R)
WR	11	Brandon Aiyuk	15	Jauan Jennings
LT	71	Trent Williams	76	Jaylon Moore
LG	65	Aaron Banks	74	Spencer Burford
C	64	Jake Brendel	63	Nick Zakelj
RG	55	Jon Feliciano		Dominick Puni (R)
RT	68	Colton McKivitz	75	Brandon Parker
TE	85	George Kittle	81	Cameron Latu
QB	13	Brock Purdy	5	Joshua Dobbs
RB	23	Christian McCaffrey	25	Elijah Mitchell
FB	44	Kyle Juszczyk		

DEFENSE

DE	97	Nick Bosa	94	Yetur Gross-Matos
DT	99	Maliek Collins	92	Jordan Elliott
DT	98	Javon Hargrave	90	Kevin Givens
DE	56	Leonard Floyd	95	Drake Jackson
ILB	54	Fred Warner	45	Dem. Flannigan-Fowles
ILB	57	Dre Greenlaw	50	Jalen Graham
WLB	59	De'Vondre Campbell	47	Ezekiel Turner
CB	7	Charvarius Ward	22	Isaac Yiadom
CB	2	Deommodore Lenoir		Renardo Green (R)
SS	29	Talanoa Hufanga		Malik Mustapha (R)
FS	27	Ji'Ayir Brown	30	George Odum

SPECIALISTS

K	4	Jake Moody	KR	Isaac Guerendo (R)
P	3	Mitch Wishnowsky	PR	Ricky Pearsall (R)

31.8

San Francisco's 31.8 percent offensive Defense-adjusted Value over Average (DVOA) per FTN's DVOA stats was first in the NFL by more than 10 percentage points over second-place Miami.

49ERS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Ricky Pearsall	WR	6-1	190	Florida
2.	Renardo Green	CB	6-0	186	Florida State
3.	Dominick Puni	OG	6-5	313	Kansas
4.	Malik Mustapha	S	5-10	206	Wake Forest
4.	Isaac Guerendo	RB	6-0	221	Louisville
4.	Jacob Cowing	WR	5-8	168	Arizona
6.	Jarrett Kingston	OG	6-4	306	USC
7.	Taum Bethune	LB	5-11	227	Florida State

The 49ers' loaded roster and looming salary cap challenges meant they drafted with 2025 in mind. They probably won't be able to afford both Brandon Aiyuk and Deebo Samuel next season, which explains their first-round selection of Ricky Pearsall. At cornerback, Charvarius Ward and Deommodore Lenoir are in the final year of their contracts, inspiring the selection of Renardo Green. At guard, they grabbed Dominick Puni with projected starters Aaron Banks and Jon Feliciano scheduled for free agency in 2025. At safety, where Talanoa Hufanga has one year left on his deal, Malik Mustapha could be the draft pick who has the best chance to start as a rookie. Hufanga suffered a torn ACL in November and wasn't playing at his 2022 All-Pro level before he was injured.

SEAHAWKS

NFC WEST FORECAST

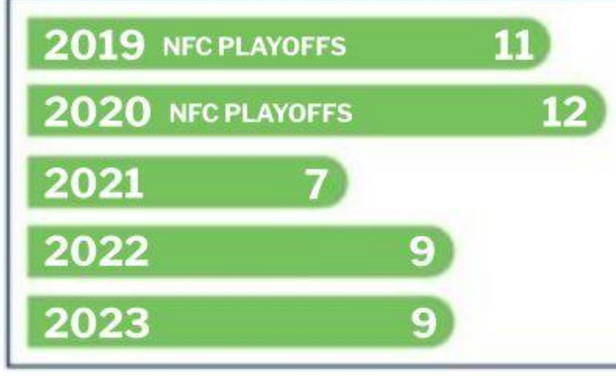
3

2024 SCHEDULE

Date	Opponent	Time
Sept. 8	Denver	4:05
Sept. 15	at New England	1:00
Sept. 22	Miami	4:05
Sept. 30	at Detroit	8:15
Oct. 6	N.Y. Giants	4:25
Oct. 10	San Francisco	8:15
Oct. 20	at Atlanta	1:00
Oct. 27	Buffalo	4:05
Nov. 3	L.A. Rams	4:25
Nov. 10	BYE	
Nov. 17	at San Francisco	4:05
Nov. 24	Arizona	4:25
Dec. 1	at N.Y. Jets	1:00
Dec. 8	at Arizona	4:05
Dec. 15	Green Bay	8:20
Dec. 22	Minnesota	4:05
Dec. 26	at Chicago	8:15
Jan. 4/5	at L.A. Rams	TBD

All times Eastern

FIVE-YEAR WIN TREND



THE COACHES

Head Coach: Mike Macdonald
Record With Team: First season
Career Record: First season
Offensive Coordinator: Ryan Grubb
Defensive Coordinator: Aden Durde
Special Teams Coordinator: Jay Harbaugh
Quarterbacks: Charles London
Running Backs: Kennedy Polamalu
Wide Receivers: Frisman Jackson
Tight Ends: Mack Brown
Offensive Line: Scott Huff
Defensive Line: Justin Hinds
Inside Linebackers: Kirk Olivadotti
Outside Linebackers: Chris Partridge
Defensive Passing Game Coordinator/ Defensive Backs: Karl Scott
Safeties: Jeff Howard

Coming into 2023, Seahawks fans were uncertain about Seattle's direction but confident after a 2022 playoff appearance. General manager John Schneider did a great job in acquiring top-end talent in the draft, specifically with his two first-round picks: cornerback Devon Witherspoon and wide receiver Jaxon Smith-Njigba. The Seahawks fell just short of returning to the postseason in head coach Pete Carroll's final season at the helm, but with some important pieces in place, they should have their sights set on the playoffs in 2024 under rookie head coach Mike Macdonald.

OFFENSE

After an impressive 2022 that earned him a hefty new contract, quarterback Geno Smith wasn't quite as good in 2023. He missed two games due to an injury and saw his numbers (3,624 passing yards, 20 touchdowns) take a slight step back from the career highs he achieved in 2022. However, some of those struggles can be blamed on Seattle's offensive line, which battled injuries all season long. Star left tackle Charles Cross missed three games, while the extremely reliable Abraham Lucas missed 11 games at right tackle.

Macdonald and Schneider did a good job addressing the issues up front, selecting UConn guard Christian Haynes in the third round to step in at right guard while signing former Cleveland Browns center Nick Harris and 2015 first-round pick and former New York Jets guard Laken Tomlinson as depth pieces. Protecting Smith will be Seattle's top priority; he displayed in 2022 that he could be among the league's best passers with a clean pocket.

The offensive line will also be vital for first-year offensive coordinator Ryan Grubb, whom Macdonald is entrusting to call plays in the NFL for the first time. Grubb joins the staff after holding the same title with the University of Washington for the last two seasons, where he helped turn the national runner-up Huskies into one of the best offenses in the NCAA.

Grubb, who is used to working with stars like quarterback Michael Penix Jr. and wide receiver Rome Odunze — two top-10 picks in the 2024 draft — will have plenty of firepower at his disposal in 2024. His offense was able to produce two 1,000-yard receivers at the college level, and with the trio of DK Metcalf, Tyler Lockett and Smith-Njigba as his chess pieces, he should be able to revamp Seattle's air attack.

A look at Washington's film under Grubb shows that the new offensive coordinator is also more than capable of figuring out an effective split between multiple running backs, and he walks into a situation where he will have one of the best young running back duos in the NFL to work with. Both Kenneth Walker III and Zach Charbonnet have proven to be extremely effective whenever they're on the field, and both should end up as solid contributors in the new scheme.

DEFENSE

Over the last two years, Schneider has been relentless when it comes to upgrading Seattle's front seven. The Seahawks, who finished tied for 11th in the NFL in 2023 with 47 sacks, made a blockbuster trade for former New York Giants defensive lineman Leonard Williams at the trade deadline and signed him to a three-year, $64.5 million contract extension in March — but they didn't stop there.

Seattle proceeded to sign former Dallas Cowboys defensive tackle Jonathan

JOE NICHOLSON-USA TODAY SPORTS

Hankins in free agency before using the 16th overall pick on Texas defensive tackle Byron Murphy II, who was considered by many scouts to be the best defender in the draft. Adding Murphy to an already strong defensive line could turn Seattle's pass rush into one of the league's best in 2024.

That pass rush is anchored by outside linebackers Boye Mafe, who led the Seahawks last season with nine sacks, and Darrell Taylor, who finished third with 5.5. While outside linebacker seems solid, there are some questions at inside linebacker after Bobby Wagner and former first-round pick Jordyn Brooks both departed in free agency. Macdonald, who has shown that he can do a great job scheming from the position, opted to bring in free agents Jerome Baker and Tyrel Dodson from the Miami Dolphins and Buffalo Bills, respectively.

The rookie head coach should also feel very confident in his secondary, which is anchored by the reigning Defensive Rookie of the Year and last year's No. 5 overall pick, cornerback Devon Witherspoon. The Illinois product quickly established himself as one of the best young defensive backs in the league, tallying 16 pass breakups, a 97-yard interception return for a touchdown and a forced fumble.

He will be flanked by safety Julian Love, who has quickly become one of the more senior members of the secondary after Seattle moved on from his running mates Quandre Diggs and Jamaal Adams in the offseason. Love led the Seahawks with four interceptions and was second on the team with 123 tackles, behind only Wagner, who led the league with 183 stops.

Working in Macdonald's scheme, the combination of Witherspoon, Love and cornerback Riq Woolen could make for one of the NFL's best secondaries in 2024.

SPECIALISTS

Year in and year out, Seattle continues to field one of the most consistent special teams units in the NFL. Punter Michael Dickson remains one of the best in the league after averaging 50 yards per kick last season, while kicker Jason Myers tied for second in 2023 with his 35 made field goals. As for the return game, the speedy Dee Eskridge should get a chance to handle the new format of kickoffs, while former Carolina Panthers receiver Laviska Shenault Jr. could be an exciting option as Seattle's new punt returner.

FINAL ANALYSIS

The NFC West is an extremely tough division, as it includes the reigning NFC champion San Francisco 49ers and the Los Angeles Rams, who were one of the NFL's biggest surprises last season. With an upgrade at offensive coordinator and multiple positions of need, the Seahawks should be in the mix for a wild card spot in 2024.

2023 RESULTS (9-8)

Sept. 10	L.A. Rams	L	13-30
Sept. 17	at Detroit (ot)	W	37-31
Sept. 24	Carolina	W	37-27
Oct. 2	at N.Y. Giants	W	24-3
Oct. 15	at Cincinnati	L	13-17
Oct. 22	Arizona	W	20-10
Oct. 29	Cleveland	W	24-20
Nov. 5	at Baltimore	L	3-37
Nov. 12	Washington	W	29-26
Nov. 19	at L.A. Rams	L	16-17
Nov. 23	San Francisco	L	13-31
Nov. 30	at Dallas	L	35-41
Dec. 10	at San Francisco	L	16-28
Dec. 17	Philadelphia	W	20-17
Dec. 24	at Tennessee	W	20-17
Dec. 31	Pittsburgh	L	23-30
Jan. 7	at Arizona	W	21-20

2023 TEAM STATS

TEAM OFFENSE	Stat	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	322.9	21	12
Rushing	92.9	28	14
Passing	230.0	14	8
Scoring	21.4	17	8
Third Down %	36.2	23	13
Points/Play	0.366	11	7

TEAM DEFENSE	STAT	NFL Rank	NFC Rank
Total	371.4	30	15
Rushing	138.4	31	15
Passing	233.0	21	10
Scoring	23.6	25	11
Interceptions	11	T19	T8
Sacks	47	T11	3
Opp. Pts./Play	0.350	18	8
TO Differential	+2	T12	7

2023 INDIVIDUAL STATS

PASSING	ATT	COMP	YDS	TD	INT
Geno Smith	499	323	3,624	20	9
Drew Lock	76	48	543	3	3

RUSHING	ATT	YDS	AVG	TD
Kenneth Walker III	219	905	4.1	8
Zach Charbonnet	108	462	4.3	1
Geno Smith	37	155	4.2	1

RECEIVING	REC	YDS	AVG	TD
Tyler Lockett	79	894	11.3	5
DK Metcalf	66	1,114	16.9	8
Jaxon Smith-Njigba	63	628	10.0	4
Zach Charbonnet	33	209	6.3	0
Noah Fant	32	414	12.9	0
Kenneth Walker III	29	259	8.9	1

KICKING: Jason Myers, 35-42 FGs, 33-33 PATs, 138 points
TACKLES: Bobby Wagner, 183; Jordyn Brooks, 111
SACKS: Boye Mafe, 9.0; Jarran Reed, 7.0
INTERCEPTIONS: Julian Love, 4; Tre Brown, 2; Riq Woolen, 2

OUTSIDE THE HUDDLE

DAWGS IN THE HOUSE General manager John Schneider has an appreciation for the nearby University of Washington. Not only did the Seahawks bring in the Huskies' offensive coordinator Ryan Grubb, but they also added the team's former offensive line coach, Scott Huff, and one of Huff's former students, center Nick Harris.

MAN OF MANY TALENTS Offensive tackle **Charles Cross**, Seattle's 2022 first-round pick, was nicknamed "Sweet Feet" by his college coach, the late Mike Leach. Cross has a pretty sweet assortment of outside interests. He is a talented basketball player and skilled fisherman, and after arriving in Seattle, he took to YouTube to learn how to play the piano.

0-STAR RECRUIT Every year, the NFL Draft tells incredible stories of players who have persevered and worked as hard as possible every day of their lives to reach their goals. Few worked as hard as defensive back Devon Witherspoon, who didn't start playing football until his junior year of high school and received just one scholarship offer from a Power 5 program before transforming himself into a top-5 draft pick.

FUTURE RESTAURANTEUR? DK Metcalf grew up watching his parents cook and has said that if football didn't work out for him, he planned on attending culinary school. He hopes to open a restaurant when he's done playing football, and if he does, he'll be following in the footsteps of Seahawks legends Richard Sherman and Kam Chancellor, who opened the aptly named Legion Sports Bar in nearby Bellevue, Washington, in late 2023.

WORLD TRAVELER Every year before training camp, defensive lineman Leonard Williams clears his mind by taking an international trip. He has traveled to Peru, Vietnam, Thailand, Argentina, Jamaica, Bermuda, the Dominican Republic and Japan among other destinations. Williams also makes his own sushi with fish he's caught on various spearfishing excursions.

SCOUTING THE SEAHAWKS

OPPOSING SCOUTS SIZE UP SEATTLE "Expecting big things from Mike Macdonald. He gets great reviews from Jim Harbaugh and John Harbaugh and has learned a ton to prepare to be a first-time head coach. See a lot of leadership qualities from him and defensive knowledge. … Running it back with Geno Smith isn't a bad idea. He is still a really accurate, sound quarterback. … Love this receiving corps. They've got it all with DK Metcalf, Jaxon Smith-Njigba and Tyler Lockett. … Charles Cross' footwork is textbook. .. Having Laken Tomlinson at left guard next to Cross is an awesome tandem for Kenneth Walker III to run behind. … Walker's tackle-breaking is special. Amazing second effort and determination. … Drafting Byron Murphy II gives the Seahawks the kind of impact interior defensive lineman everyone wants on their roster. … This is a talented group with Dre'Mont Jones, Jarran Reed and Leonard Williams. … Not a big name, but Uchenna Nwosu can go. He's full-tilt out there chasing quarterbacks down. … There's a hole at linebacker after losing Jordyn Brooks to Miami. … Devon Witherspoon deserved to be NFL Defensive Player of the Year. … Riq Woolen needs to counter now that the receivers have started figuring out his game. Julian Love and Rayshawn Jenkins are really steady safeties."

KIRTHMON F. DOZIER-USA TODAY SPORTS

2024 SEAHAWKS VETERAN ROSTER

QUARTERBACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
6 Howell, Sam	QB	6-1	225	2	North Carolina	T-Was-24	D5a-Was-22
7 Smith, Geno	QB	6-3	221	11	West Virginia	FA-19	D2-NYJ-13

RUNNING BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
26 Charbonnet, Zach	RB	6-1	214	1	UCLA	D2b-23	D2b-Sea-23
25 McIntosh, Kenny	RB	6-0	204	1	Georgia	D7-23	D7-Sea-23
9 Walker III, Kenneth	RB	5-9	211	2	Michigan State	D2b-22	D2b-Sea-22

RECEIVERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
19 Bobo, Jake	WR	6-4	207	1	Duke	FA-23	FA-Sea-23
86 Brown, Pharaoh	TE	6-5	246	6	Oregon	FA-NE-24	FA-LV-17
1 Eskridge, Dee	WR	5-9	190	3	Western Michigan	D2-21	D2-Sea-21
87 Fant, Noah	TE	6-4	249	5	Iowa	T-Den-22	D1-Den-19
16 Lockett, Tyler	WR	5-10	182	9	Kansas State	D3-15	D3-Sea-15
85 Mabry, Tyler	TE	6-3	247	4	Maryland	FA-20	FA-Sea-20
14 Metcalf, DK	WR	6-4	235	5	Ole Miss	D2b-19	D2b-Sea-19
38 Russell, Brady	TE	6-3	250	1	Colorado	PS-Phi-23	FA-Phi-23
81 Shenault Jr., Laviska	WR	6-1	220	4	Colorado	FA-Car-24	D2-Jac-20
11 Smith-Njigba, Jaxon	WR	6-0	197	1	Ohio State	D1b-23	D1b-Sea-23
82 White, Cody	WR	6-3	215	4	Michigan State	FA-23	FA-KC-20
86 Winston Jr., Easop	WR	5-11	190	3	Washington State	FA-22	FA-LAR-20
83 Young, Dareke	WR	6-2	224	2	Lenior-Rhyne	D7b-22	D7b-Sea-22

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
73 Anchrum Jr., Tremayne	G	6-2	314	4	Clemson	FA-LAR-24	D7c-LAR-20
75 Bradford, Anthony	G	6-4	332	1	LSU	D4a-23	D4a-Sea-23
67 Cross, Charles	T	6-5	311	2	Mississippi State	D1-22	D1-Sea-22
66 Curtis, McClendon	T	6-6	325	1	Chattanooga	PS-LV-23	FA-LV-23
74 Fant, George	T	6-5	322	7	Western Kentucky	FA-Hou-24	FA-Sea-16
78 Forsythe, Stone	T	6-8	307	3	Florida	D6-21	D6-Sea-21
56 Harris, Nick	C	6-1	293	4	Washington	FA-Cle-24	D5-Cle-20
62 Hunt, Joey	C	6-2	299	8	TCU	D6-16	D6-Sea-16
72 Lucas, Abraham	T	6-6	322	2	Washington State	D3-22	D3-Sea-22
51 Oluwatimi, Olu	C	6-2	309	1	Michigan	D5b-23	D5b-Sea-23
79 O'Neal, Raiqwon	T	6-4	305	1	UCLA	PS-TB-23	FA-TB-23
70 Tomlinson, Laken	G	6-3	323	9	Duke	FA-NYJ-24	D1-Det-15

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
95 Adams, Myles	DE	6-2	290	4	Rice	FA-20	FA-Car-20
77 Gotel, Matt	NT	6-1	341	1	West Florida	FA-23	FA-Sea-22
97 Hankins, Johnathan	DT	6-3	325	11	Ohio State	FA-Dal-24	D2-NYG-13
55 Jones, Dre'Mont	DE	6-3	281	5	Ohio State	FA-Den-23	D3-Den-19
94 Morris, Mike	DE	6-6	295	1	Michigan	D5a-23	D5a-Sea-23
90 Reed, Jarran	NT	6-3	306	8	Alabama	D2-16	D2-Sea-16
99 Williams, Leonard	DE	6-5	300	9	USC	T-NYG-23	D1-NYJ-15
93 Young, Cameron	NT	6-3	304	1	Mississippi State	D4b-23	D4b-Sea-23

LINEBACKERS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
17 Baker, Jerome	LB	6-2	225	6	Ohio State	FA-Mia-24	D3-Mia-18
0 Dodson, Tyrel	LB	6-0	237	4	Texas A&M	FA-Buf-24	FA-Buf-19
58 Hall, Derick	LB	6-3	254	1	Auburn	D2a-23	D2a-Sea-23
53 Mafe, Boye	LB	6-4	261	2	Minnesota	D2a-22	D2a-Sea-22
10 Nwosu, Uchenna	LB	6-2	251	6	USC	FA-LAC-22	D2-LAC-18
50 O'Connell, Patrick	LB	6-1	227	1	Montana	FA-23	FA-Sea-23
49 Onujiogu, Joshua	LB	6-2	252	2	Framingham State	FA-22	FA-Sea-22
59 Rhattigan, Jon	LB	6-0	236	3	Army	FA-21	FA-Sea-21
52 Taylor, Darrell	LB	6-4	267	4	Tennessee	D2-20	D2-Sea-20
42 Thomas, Drake	LB	5-11	228	1	NC State	W-LV-23	FA-LV-23

DEFENSIVE BACKS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
18 Boykin, Lance	CB	6-2	198	1	Coastal Carolina	FA-23	FA-Sea-23
22 Brown, Tre	CB	5-10	185	3	Oklahoma	D4-21	D4-Sea-21
8 Bryant, Coby	DB	6-1	193	2	Cincinnati	D4-22	D4-Sea-22
23 Burns, Artie	CB	6-0	187	8	Miami	FA-Chi-22	D1-Pit-16
30 Jackson, Michael	CB	6-1	210	5	Miami	FA-21	D5-Dal-19
2 Jenkins, Rayshawn	S	6-1	200	7	Miami	FA-Jac-24	D4-LAC-17
28 Joseph, Kelvin	CB	5-11	200	3	Kentucky	FA-23	D2-Dal-21
20 Love, Julian	S	5-11	195	5	Notre Dame	FA-NYG-23	D4-NYG-19
39 Okada, Ty	S	5-11	193	1	Montana State	FA-23	FA-Sea-23
32 Reed II, Jerrick	S	5-9	196	1	New Mexico	D6-23	D6-Sea-23
34 Sutherland, Jonathan	S	5-11	202	1	Penn State	FA-23	FA-Sea-23
24 Wallace, K'Von	S	5-11	205	4	Clemson	FA-Ten-24	D4-Phi-20
21 Witherspoon, Devon	CB	6-0	185	1	Illinois	D1a-23	D1a-Sea-23
27 Woolen, Riq	CB	6-4	210	2	UTSA	D5a-22	D5a-Sea-22

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT	WT	EXP	COLLEGE	ACQUIRED	ENTRY
4 Dickson, Michael	P	6-2	208	6	Texas	D5c-18	D5c-Sea-18
5 Myers, Jason	K	5-10	190	9	Marist	FA-NYJ-19	FA-Jac-15
41 Stoll, Chris	LS	6-2	255	1	Penn State	FA-23	FA-Sea-23

OFFSEASON DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

WR	14	DK Metcalf	19	Jake Bobo
WR	16	Tyler Lockett	81	Laviska Shenault Jr.
WR	11	Jaxon Smith-Njigba	1	Dee Eskridge
LT	67	Charles Cross	78	Stone Forsythe
LG	70	Laken Tomlinson	73	Tremayne Anchrum Jr.
C	51	Olu Oluwatimi	56	Nick Harris
RG	64	Christian Haynes (R)	75	Anthony Bradford
RT	72	Abraham Lucas	74	George Fant
TE	87	Noah Fant	86	Pharaoh Brown
QB	7	Geno Smith	6	Sam Howell
RB	9	Kenneth Walker III	26	Zach Charbonnet

DEFENSE

DE	99	Leonard Williams	55	Dre'Mont Jones
NT	91	Byron Murphy II (R)	97	Johnathan Hankins
DT	90	Jarran Reed	93	Cameron Young
OLB	53	Boye Mafe	58	Derick Hall
MLB	17	Jerome Baker	42	Drake Thomas
OLB	52	Darrell Taylor	10	Uchenna Nwosu
CB	30	Michael Jackson	28	Nehemiah Pritchett (R)
CB	27	Riq Woolen	29	D.J. James (R)
NB	21	Devon Witherspoon	23	Artie Burns
SS	24	K'Von Wallace	2	Rayshawn Jenkins
FS	20	Julian Love	32	Jerrick Reed II

SPECIALISTS

K	5	Jason Myers	KR	1	Dee Eskridge
P	4	Michael Dickson	PR	81	Laviska Shenault Jr.

138.4

Seattle's run defense allowed 24 rushing touchdowns and 138.4 rushing yards per game last year, both second worst in the NFL.

SEAHAWKS IN THE DRAFT | GRADE: B+

RD	PLAYER	POS	HT	WT	COLLEGE
1.	Byron Murphy II	DT	6-0	306	Texas
3.	Christian Haynes	G	6-2	318	UConn
4.	Tyrice Knight	LB	6-0	233	UTEP
4.	AJ Barner	TE	6-6	251	Michigan
5.	Nehemiah Pritchett	CB	6-0	188	Auburn
6.	Sataoa Laumea	OT	6-4	319	Utah
6.	D.J. James	CB	6-0	170	Auburn
6.	Michael Jerrell	OT	6-5	294	Findlay

The Seahawks were in a great spot to take advantage of the first 14 picks of the draft all being on the offensive side. Byron Murphy II fell into their lap, and the interior of an already strong defensive line gains the presence of a player many scouts felt was the best defensive player in this draft. He and Seattle's second selection, guard Christian Haynes, should slot in as starters right away. Haynes provides an exciting option at right guard as GM John Schneider used a lot of the draft to add high-upside depth at positions of need. AJ Barner adds a second option at tight end, while Sataoa Laumea could be a dark horse to unseat left guard Laken Tomlinson after starting 44 straight games at Utah.

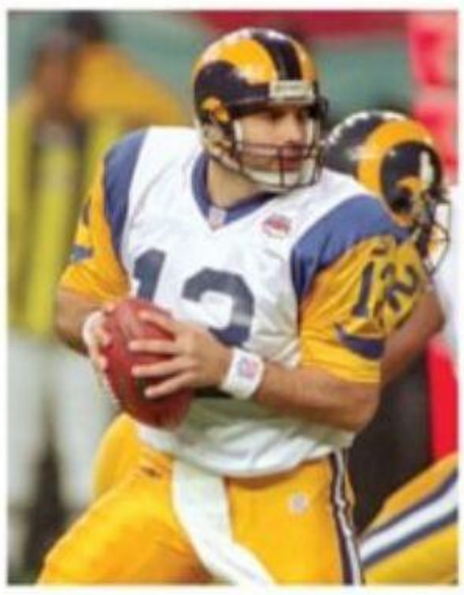
OVERTIME

THE ALL-UNDRAFTED TEAM

If a prospect doesn't hear his name called on draft weekend, his NFL journey is not necessarily over. There were 80 undrafted players on Week 1 rosters at the start of last season. Of all starting players in 2023, 11 percent were undrafted. Just last season, there were a handful of undrafted players who made an impact. Tommy DeVito became a cult hero with the New York Giants. Wide receiver/return specialist Xavier Gipson gained some fame during the New York Jets' appearance last summer on "Hard Knocks" and then put his stamp on the 2023 season with his walk-off punt-return touchdown against the Buffalo Bills in Week 1 (yes, the same night Aaron Rodgers went down with an Achilles tear four plays into the game).

There are 22 undrafted players immortalized in the Pro Football Hall of Fame and a few more who likely will get to Canton in the next few years. Going position by position, here's our all-time All-Undrafted Team:

QUARTERBACK KURT WARNER Warner's origin story — stacking groceries in his native Iowa before getting a chance in the NFL as a backup — is the stuff of legend. And if the St. Louis Rams' big 1999 free-agent signee Trent Green hadn't gone down with a preseason knee injury, perhaps Warner would have been just another undrafted player with a nondescript career. Instead, head coach Dick Vermeil handed Warner the keys to the Greatest Show on Turf, and a Hall of Fame career took flight.



RUNNING BACKS JOE PERRY "The Jet" played one year of junior college football before joining the Navy during World War II. Perry was discovered while playing for a Naval air station, and he was offered a contract by the San Francisco 49ers, then of the All-America Football Conference. After the AAFC merged with the NFL in 1950, Perry became the first player in league history to rush for back-to-back 1,000-yard seasons (1953-54) and became the first Black player to be named NFL MVP (1954). He was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1969.

AUSTIN EKELER One of four players ever to make it to the NFL from Western Colorado University, Ekeler made the most of his chance when he signed with the Chargers in 2017. He's averaged nearly 10 touchdowns through his first seven seasons. In the 2021 and '22 seasons, Ekeler averaged 1,598 yards from scrimmage and 19 touchdowns.

WIDE RECEIVERS WES WELKER Welker signed with the San Diego Chargers after going undrafted in 2004 but was cut early in the season. Then-Chargers head coach Marty Schottenheimer called that one of the biggest mistakes he ever made. In six subsequent seasons with the Patriots (2007-12), Welker averaged 112 receptions and 1,243 yards, leading the NFL in receptions three times.

DREW PEARSON Dallas Cowboys legendary personnel guru Gil Brandt signed a number of undrafted players who went on to become key contributors to America's Team. Pearson might have been Brandt's favorite find. Best known for being the recipient of Roger Staubach's Hail Mary touchdown pass that gave Dallas a 1975 playoff victory over the Minnesota Vikings, Pearson made clutch plays for the Cowboys throughout his career and was elected to the Hall of Fame in 2021.

TIGHT END ANTONIO GATES The 6-foot-4, 255-pound Gates never played college football; rather, he played power forward for the Kent State basketball team. But when NBA teams failed to show interest, Gates set up some NFL workouts. As soon as the Chargers saw him in action, they signed him. Smart move. Gates is the NFL career leader among tight ends with 116 touchdown receptions. He ranks third all-time among tight ends in receptions (955) and yards (11,841). In 2025, expect him to become the 23rd undrafted player in Canton.

OFFENSIVE TACKLES JASON PETERS Last season was Peters' 20th in the league. Along the way, he's earned nine Pro Bowl nods and was the anchor for an offensive line that helped the Philadelphia Eagles win Super Bowl LII. So why didn't Peters get drafted? He was a 321-pound tight end at Arkansas.

FROM LEFT: TONY TOMSIC-USA TODAY NETWORK; TOMMY GILLIGAN-USA TODAY SPORTS

JOE JACOBY Between 1982 and '91, Washington won three Super Bowls with three different starting quarterbacks. One of the reasons was the consistent greatness of an offensive line known as the Hogs. Jacoby was one of three Hogs who started on all three of those championship teams, along with Joe Bostic and Hall of Famer Russ Grimm.

GUARDS LARRY LITTLE Little, who played at Bethune-Cookman, signed with the Chargers in '67 and played in San Diego for two seasons before he was traded to the Miami Dolphins. It was there that Little emerged as a force. He was a five-time All-Pro and was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1993

NATE NEWTON Newton was drafted in 1983 — in the USFL, that is. He played two seasons with the USFL's Tampa Bay Bandits before signing with the Dallas Cowboys in 1986. All he did from there was go to six Pro Bowls and help Dallas win three Super Bowls.

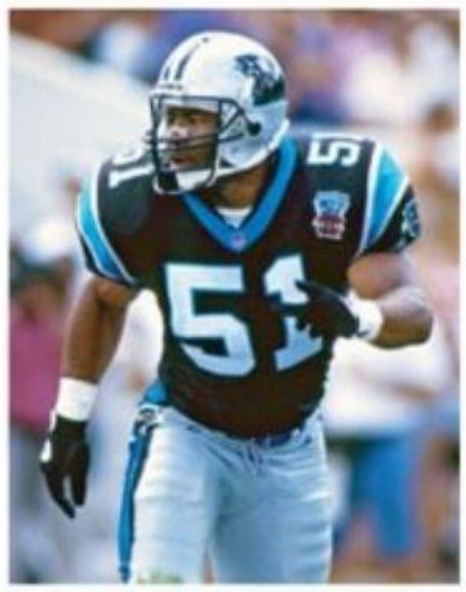
CENTER JIM LANGER In addition to playing both offensive line and linebacker at South Dakota State, Langer might have been a better baseball player than football player. He signed with the Cleveland Browns in 1970 but was cut before the season began. After the Dolphins signed him, Langer developed into a Hall of Fame-caliber center.

DEFENSIVE LINE JOHN RANDLE At 6-foot-1, 244 pounds, pro scouts saw Randle as too small to hold up as a defensive tackle in the NFL. And the fact that he was not drafted out of Texas A&I (now known as Texas A&M-Kingsville) in 1990 gave Randle the chip on his shoulder that fueled his unstoppable motor. From 1992-99, Randle never had fewer than 10 sacks in a season for the Vikings. He retired in 2003 with 137.5 career sacks and was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2010.

BILL WILLIS Willis was one of four Black players to break pro football's color barrier in 1946 (a year before Jackie Robinson did so in baseball). Willis played at Ohio State under Paul Brown, who then founded the Cleveland Browns in the All-America Football Conference. Brown signed Willis, who would become a six-time All-Pro and contribute to five Browns championships.

LINEBACKERS JAMES HARRISON Harrison's career was so much more than his uncanny 100-yard pick-6 in Super Bowl XLIII. Harrison didn't get drafted in 2002 out of Kent State because he was viewed as a tweener. The Steelers signed him to their practice squad in 2002 but eventually cut him. The Ravens picked him up, but they cut him as well. Pittsburgh re-signed him in '04, and things finally fell into place. Harrison became a force, helping the Steelers win two Super Bowls and earning NFL Defensive Player of the Year honors in '08.

SAM MILLS Just 5-foot-9, the Montclair State product became a force at middle linebacker. He went to the USFL and helped the Philadelphia Stars win a title. When Stars head coach Jim Mora was hired as head coach of the New Orleans Saints, he took Mills with him. A five-time Pro Bowler, Mills was also regarded as a fierce team leader.



CORNERBACKS DICK "NIGHT TRAIN" LANE Lane played one season of college football — at Scottsbluff Junior College in Nebraska — before enlisting in the Army in 1948 and serving for four years. He signed with the Los Angeles Rams in 1952, and his 14 interceptions as a rookie are still an NFL record. Lane finished his Hall of Fame career with 68 interceptions and seven defensive touchdowns.

WILLIE BROWN Brown was undrafted out of Grambling in 1963. The Denver Broncos signed him, and he became an all-star, but it wasn't until he was traded to the Oakland Raiders in 1967 that Brown truly made a name for himself. A member of the NFL's All-Decade Team for the 1970s, Brown had 54 career interceptions and helped the Raiders win an AFL title and two Super Bowls.

SAFETIES DONNIE SHELL The Pittsburgh Steelers drafted four players in 1974 who would become Hall of Famers — Lynn Swann, Jack Lambert, John Stallworth and Mike Webster — and then signed Shell from South Carolina State for good measure. Shell went on to become a five-time Pro Bowler and was part of the Steelers' four Super Bowl wins in the '70s before joining his classmates in Canton.

EMLEN TUNNELL Tunnell signed with the New York Giants in 1948, becoming the first Black man to play for that franchise. A six-time All-Pro, Tunnell won one NFL championship with the Giants and another with the Green Bay Packers. His 79 career interceptions were an NFL record when he retired, and he still ranks second on the all-time list.

KICKER ADAM VINATIERI After a successful season with the Amsterdam Admirals of the World League of American Football, Vinatieri was signed by the New England Patriots for the '96 NFL season, and the rest is history. Two game-winning field goals in the Super Bowl. Three Super Bowl titles with New England and another with the Indianapolis Colts.

PUNTER SEAN LANDETA Landeta came out of college in 1983 and went on to win two Super Bowls with the Giants. And for good measure, Landeta had a reputation in the New York dating scene that would make you think he was a star quarterback.

FROM LEFT: JAMES D. SMITH-USA TODAY SPORTS; USA TODAY SPORTS

OVERTIME

THE 10 BIGGEST STEALS IN NFL DRAFT HISTORY

Franchises look for game-changers in the early rounds. But it's often late-round picks that determine the success or failure of a team's draft class, sometimes making history in the process. Here are Athlon's 10 biggest steals in NFL draft history.

10. RICHARD SHERMAN AND KAM CHANCELLOR (TIE) The Seattle Seahawks built one of the most formidable secondaries in NFL history in the early 2010s with the fabled Legion of Boom. Seattle struck gold in the fifth round in consecutive drafts, picking safety Chancellor in 2010 and identifying cornerback Sherman the following year.

9. BROCK PURDY Mr. Irrelevant was thrust into the starting role late in the '22 season, and he firmly seized the opportunity by going 5-0 down the stretch and leading the 49ers to the NFC Championship Game. In Purdy's second pro season, he led the 49ers to Super Bowl LVIII.

8. JASON KELCE Although Kelce didn't move to center until his senior season at Cincinnati, the Eagles took a chance on him with the 191st pick. Kelce won the starting center job as a rookie and went on to become a six-time first-team All-Pro selection.

7. MIKE WEBSTER Webster was tapped with pick No. 125 overall in 1974. He developed into one of the league's toughest players and arguably the greatest center in history. Webster was named to nine Pro Bowls and five first-team All-Pro squads.

6. SHANNON SHARPE Denver picked Sharpe No. 192 overall. Before long, though, he became one of the league's best tight ends, earning eight Pro Bowl selections and four first-team All-Pro nods. Sharpe won two Super Bowls with Denver and added a third championship as a member of the Baltimore Ravens.

5. JOHNNY UNITAS The Steelers did indeed make an inspired pick when they tapped Unitas with the 102nd overall pick in the 1955 NFL Draft — but they cut him before he ever appeared in a regular-season game for the team. He then played semipro football for a season until Baltimore scooped him up as a free agent the next year, and the rest is history. Johnny U led the NFL in passing yards four times and was named to 11 consecutive Pro Bowls (1957-67).

4. BART STARR The NFL draft was a much different beast back in the 1950s. There was even more guesswork, evidenced by the fact that the Green Bay Packers acquired a future franchise cornerstone with pick No. 200 in 1956. Starr would go on to guide the Packers to five NFL championships, including victories in the first two Super Bowls.

3. DEACON JONES The man credited with coining the term "sack" slipped to the Los Angeles Rams with the No. 186 overall pick in '61. Jones, remembered for his penchant for sacking the quarterback before the stat was even recognized, is one of the greatest defensive players in football history. He was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1980.

2. ROGER STAUBACH Despite winning the Heisman Trophy at Navy, Staubach didn't inspire much interest from NFL teams in the 1964 draft due to his mandatory four-year military stint. Undaunted, the Dallas Cowboys grabbed him with pick No. 122. Staubach joined the Cowboys in 1969 and ultimately would lead Dallas to two Super Bowl victories.

1. TOM BRADY Tom Terrific famously was selected with the No. 199 overall pick out of Michigan in the 2000 NFL draft, after six other quarterbacks had been picked by other teams: Chad Pennington, Giovanni Carmazzi, Chris Redman, Tee Martin, Marc Bulger and Spergon Wynn. Brady won seven Super Bowls and owns career NFL records with 7,753 completions, 12,050 pass attempts, 89,214 passing yards and 649 touchdown passes.

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